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A Mixed-Method Examination of the Impact of Academic, Social, and Personal-Emotional Adjustment on the English Performance of Arabian Gulf Students Studying in American Intensive English Programs

Mais Flaieh Hasan Al Jabbawi
University of Central Florida

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A MIXED-METHOD EXAMINATION OF THE IMPACT OF ACADEMIC, SOCIAL,
AND PERSONAL-EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT ON THE ENGLISH
PERFORMANCE OF ARABIAN GULF STUDENTS STUDYING IN AMERICAN
INTENSIVE ENGLISH PROGRAMS

by

MAIS F. AL-JABBAWI
B.A University of Babylon, 2003
M.A. University of Babylon, 2005

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Major Professor: Stephen Sivo

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ABSTRACT

The current study identifies and discusses the adjustment challenges facing Arabian Gulf Students (AGSs) that may affect their English performance (EP) in intensive English programs (IEPs) in the United States. The current study uses *student departure theory* to lead the theoretical framework and incorporates Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) and Social Integration Questionnaire (SIQ) to lead the methodology of this study. The mixed-method investigation with multi-location sampling examined 160 AGSs, enrolled full-time in different IEPs in the U.S. during the spring semester of 2019. The AGSs participants were from Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman. A pilot study preceded the final study to obtain AGSs' insight on the questionnaire items and time consumption. In the final study, the participating students completed a demographic information questionnaire as well as the SACQ and SIQ for the quantitative segment of this study. Face-to-face and Skype interviews followed as the qualitative segment of the proposed study. Data analyses included several methods. The questionnaire results were analyzed by inputting data into *IBM Statistics Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics*. The interview responses were analyzed within a phenomenological approach by finding common themes within the interview responses. The findings shed light on the needs and means of helping AGSs succeed in achieving high levels of English proficiency in IEPs in the U.S.

To all of you, with love.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	xi
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS	xiv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	1
1.1 Statement of the Problem.....	6
1.2 Research Questions	9
1.2.1 Quantitative Questions.....	9
1.2.2 Qualitative Questions.....	9
1.3 Delimitations.....	10
1.4 Limitations	10
1.5 Definition of Terms.....	12
1.6 Summary	14
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	16
2.1 Students' Adjustment to Higher Education	18
2.1.1 Students' Academic Adjustment to Higher Education	27
2.1.2 Students' Social Adjustment to Higher Education	29
2.1.3 Students' Personal-emotional Adjustment to Higher Education	33
2.2 Students' Academic Performance in Higher Education	35
2.2.1 Students' Academic Adjustment and Academic Performance	36
2.2.1.1 Students' Motivation and Academic Performance	37
2.2.1.2 Academic Environment and Academic Performance	38
2.2.1.3 Students' Efficiency and Academic Performance	42
2.2.1.4 Academic Effort (Application) and Academic Performance.....	46
2.2.2 Students' Social Adjustment and Academic Performance	47
2.2.2.1 Social Involvement and Academic Performance	51
2.2.2.2 Involvement on Campus and Academic Performance.....	51
2.2.2.3 Relocation and Academic Performance.....	52
2.2.2.4 Satisfaction with Education and Academic Performance.....	54
2.2.2.5 Institute and Faculty Reputation and Academic Performance.....	58
2.2.2.6 Social Support and Academic Performance	59

2.2.2.7 Ethnic Origin and Identity and Academic Performance	61
2.2.2.8 Social Life and Academic Performance	63
2.2.2.9 Financial Aid and Academic Performance	64
2.2.3 Students' Personal-Emotional Adjustment and Academic Performance.....	64
2.2.3.1 Psychological Well-Being and Academic Performance	65
2.2.3.2 Physical Well-Being and Academic Performance	66
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	68
3.1 Research Design.....	69
3.1.1 Validity and Reliability.....	72
3.1.2 Ethics.....	73
3.2 Research Setting.....	74
3.3. Population & Sampling.....	75
3.4 Data Analysis Procedures	76
3.5 Instrumentation	77
3.5.1 Demographic Questionnaire	78
3.5.2 Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ)	78
3.5.3 Social Integration Questionnaire (SIQ)	79
3.5.4 Follow-Up Semi-Structured Interviews	80
3.5.5 Internet-Based TOEFL Test (iBT).....	80
3.6 Data Collection Procedures.....	81
3.6.1 Hard Copy and Online Questionnaires	81
3.6.2 Face-to-Face and Skype Follow-Up Interviews	83
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS	84
4.1 Pilot Study.....	85
4.1.1 Sample Size and Site.....	85
4.1.2 Discussion of Pilot Study	86
4.2 Quantitative Data	87
4.2.1 Descriptive Data.....	88
4.2.2 SACQ and SIQ Questionnaires' Data.....	91
4.2.3 Findings Associated with Quantitative Research Questions	93
4.2.2.1. Research Question 1	94
4.2.2.2. Research Question 2	95

4.2.2.3. Research Question 3	97
4.2.2.4 Summery of Quantitative Results	98
4.3 Qualitative Data	101
4.3.1 Demographic Data of the Semi-Structured Interviews	101
4.3.2 Findings Associated with Qualitative Research Questions	104
4.3.2.1 Research Question 1 and Research Question 4.....	106
4.3.2.1.1. Motivation.....	106
4.3.2.1.2. Academic Environment.....	110
4.3.2.1.3 Students' Efficiency	112
4.3.2.1.4 Academic Effort (Application)	114
4.3.2.2 Research Question 2 and Research Question 4.....	116
4.3.2.3 Research Question 3 and Research Question 4.....	125
4.3.2.3.1 Psychological Well-Being.....	126
4.3.2.3.2 Physical Well-Being	127
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS	129
5.1 Analysis of Results of Quantitative Questions	129
5.1.1 Research Question 1	129
5.1.2 Research Question 2	130
5.1.3 Research Question 3	132
5.2 Analysis of Results of Qualitative Questions	133
5.2.1 Research Questions 1 and 4	133
5.2.2 Research Questions 2 and 4	137
5.2.3 Research Questions 3 and 4	140
5.3 Impact of the Study	143
5.4 Strengths of the Study	144
5.5 Weaknesses of the Study	145
5.6 Limitations	146
5.7 Implications.....	147
5.7.1. ESL/EFL Instructors	148
5.7.2. IEPs' Administrations.....	149
5.7.3. Future Research	151
5.8 Conclusion	153

APPENDIX A: SIQ QUESTIONNAIRE	154
APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE	157
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	162
APPENDIX D: IRB APPROVAL LETTER	165
APPENDIX E: VALIDATION EMAIL OF ARABIC TRANSLATION	167
APPENDIX F: PERMISSION LETTER FROM SIQ	169
APPENDIX G: THE INVITATION LETTER.....	171
APPENDIX H: THE VALIDATION EMAILS OF ENGLISH TRANSCRIPTS AND THEME CODING	173
REFERENCES	176

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Factors Affecting Student's Adjustment to Higher Education (Baker & Siryk, 1989, 1999)	22
Figure 2: Basic Theoretical Model (Baker & Siryk, 1989, 1999)	23
Figure 3: Final Theoretical Model Based on Baker and Siryk (1989, 1999) and Rienties's et al. (2011, 2012a)	27
Figure 4: Aspects of Academic Adjustment (Baker & Siryk, 1989, 1999)	28
Figure 5: Aspects of Social Adjustment (Baker & Siryk, 1989, 1999; Rienties et al., 2011, 2012a)	30
Figure 6: Aspects of Personal-Emotional Adjustment (Baker & Siryk, 1989, 1999).....	33
Figure 7: TOEFL iBT by Section Score Means and Native Language (ETS, 2018).....	45
Figure 8: Correlation between SACQ/ SIQ and TOEFL Score	93

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Pilot Study Demographics	86
Table 2 Participants' Nationality and Gender Distribution	90
Table 3 Participants' Age Distribution	90
Table 4 Participants' Marital Status Distribution	91
Table 5 Mean and Standard Deviation of TOEFL Scores and Adjustment Factors	92
Table 6 Correlation between the SACQ/SIQ Questionnaire and TOEFL Scores	92
Table 7 Dependent and Independent Variables Regression	93
Table 8 Descriptive Statistics for TOEFL Score and Academic Adjustment.....	94
Table 9 Correlation between TOEFL Score and Academic Adjustment.....	95
Table 10 Descriptive Statistics for TOEFL Score and Academic Adjustment.....	96
Table 11 Correlation between TOEFL Score and Social Adjustment.....	96
Table 12 Descriptive Statistics for TOEFL Score and Personal-Emotional Adjustment .	97
Table 13 Correlation between TOEFL Score and Personal-Emotional Adjustment	98
Table 14 Independent and Dependent Variables Regression	98
Table 15 Variation in the Dependent Criterion F	99
Table 16 Beta Value of Dependent and Independent Variables	100
Table 17 Variance Inflation Factor (VIF).....	101
Table 18 Qualitative Data from Interviews	103
Table 19 Results of Qualitative Research Questions	105
Table 20 Interviewees' Quotations of Absence of Motivation.....	108
Table 21 Interviewees' Quotations of Limited Academic Activities	109
Table 22 Interviewees' Quotations of Academic Activities	110
Table 23 Interviewees' Quotations of Academic Environment.....	111
Table 24 Interviewees' Quotations of Academic Support.....	113
Table 25 Interviewees' Quotations of Satisfaction with American IEPs	115
Table 26 Interviewees' Quotations of Satisfaction with IEPs' Social Activities	117
Table 27 Interviewees' Quotations of Cultural Differences	119
Table 28 Interviewees' Quotations of Culture Understanding	121

Table 29 Interviewees' Quotations of Friendship Differences	123
Table 30 Interviewees' Quotations of Relocation/ Homesickness	125
Table 31 Interviewees' Quotations of Psychological Well-Being.....	127

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

AGCs	Arabian Gulf Countries
AGSs	Arabian Gulf Students
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EP	English Performance
ESL	English as a Second Language
FL	Foreign Language
IEPs	Intensive English Programs
IRB	Institutional Review Board
ISA	International Students' Adjustment
L1	First Language/ Native Language
L2	Second Language
SACQ	Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire
SIQ	Social Integration Questionnaire
SPSS	Statistics Package for Social Sciences
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

International students from all over the world increase cultural diversity and add new experiences to the culture of U.S., which enriches the educational experiences for both domestic and international students (Wang, 2007). The number of international students attending American higher education institutes increased by 3.4% from 2016 to 2017, reaching more than 1,078,000 students according to the *Open Doors Report* from 2018 (Inside Higher ED, 2018; Institute of International Education, 2018). In accordance with a report published by the Institute of International Education that surveyed 15,902 international students on the significance of studying in the U.S., 78.3% of the respondents indicated they want to finish their studies in the U.S. because of the extensive range of schools and programs. In addition, 77% of the students referred to the high quality of higher education system, and 67.9% want to study in the U.S. because of its welcoming environment to international students (IIE, 2015). Based on current statistics and *Open Doors Report* 2018, it is clear that the number of international students in the U.S. will probably continue to increase.

This expansion indicates the importance of raising more awareness of the adjustment challenges faced by international students, for instance Arabian Gulf students (AGSs), in the American educational institute. Some of the adjustment challenges are academic, social, and personal-emotional difficulties (Baker & Siryk, 1989, 1999; Rienties et al., 2011, 2012a; Tinto, 1975). AGSs experience academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustment difficulties differently than domestic students and other international students (Ang & Liamputtong, 2008; Meeuwisse, Severiens, & Born, 2010a;

Salihi & Hoosain, 2014). For instance, AGSs handle adjustment issues with more pressure and stress due to economic, cultural, religious, social, psychological, and political factors (Melius, 2017; Moaddel, 2002). Arabian Gulf Countries (AGCs) differ from other Arab countries in North Africa and the Middle East in terms of their economic, political, social, and demographic conditions (Colombo, 2012). In AGCs, the influence of these dynamics is compounded by the massive prominence of a shared history, culture, and identity across these countries. These countries are ruled by monarchies, with the exception of the Republic of Iraq, that demonstrate a conservative and traditional regime with their people (Colombo, 2012). In addition, they perceive themselves as a “club of monarchies” (Colombo, 2012, p. 121) that has retained a traditional governing system and culture practices for decades that differentiates them from other Arab countries.

This study placed more emphasis on AGSs’ academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustments and articulated the impact of these factors on the students’ EP. Academic differences, for instance campus climate, is one of these adjustment challenges that international students must confront, especially for students from Arabian Gulf countries (AGCs) because of their home countries’ cultural and educational systems differences. Yopez (1994) indicated that some cultural backgrounds might affect class participation, particularly AGSs in Intensive English Programs (IEPs) who are not accustomed to mixed-gender classes and campuses. For instance, Arabian Gulf male students may have stronger oral skills compared to female students when it comes to classroom participation in the U.S because of the nature of their cultural background. In

some AGCs, females have a relative freedom that grants them decision making within the boundaries of their culture's system of values and beliefs (Sobh & Belk, 2011b; Welchman, 2007), while other AGCs' culture molds females' behavior in a firm way to match the society expectations (Abudabbeh, 2005; Melius, 2017). In ESL/ EFL classes, gender boundaries impact classroom's participation and interaction (Jule, 2002). This can be more identifiable when there are AGSs in the classroom because of their cultural background and classroom norms in their countries that implement gender-based separated classrooms. Banks (2004, 2016) explained how these gender-biased classes may influence students' involvement in class, which is essential in class interaction. Ang and Liamputtong (2008) showed how international students have to cope with the challenge of adjusting their performance to align with the campus environment and they go through a transitional process that takes time to learn and master as part of their educational, cultural, and social adjustment (Blake, 2006). In some Muslim countries' students, such as AGCs, do not prefer working in small groups that include both genders (Melius, 2017; Shaw, 2009).

In addition, the differences in the language origins can be a great challenge for international students, such as Chinese, Japanese, and Arab students since their mother tongue languages don't share the same origins with the English language. These differences in the language origins hinder the students' adjustment to a new academic and social environment because of the lack of communication. In addition, students might not be very motivated to learn English because they don't see the need for learning English

since it is not necessary beyond their English language classroom (Syed, 2003) for communicating with family members, friends, and job market.

Adjusting to new cultural traditions is not an easy process for many international students, including AGSs. The stress they endure because of the social adjustment challenges is not only related to their adjustment to the new culture, but to the different educational structures, values, classroom practices, relations with peers and friends, social patterns, language, and food as well (Friedman, 2005). Given it is not an easy or fast process, international students attending American universities and colleges face difficulties in adjusting to the social-cultural changes that hold back their adjustment progression. Farkas (2005) explained how some international students might experience greater barriers than just the cultural adjustment, for instance language barrier and their limited knowledge of English. He stated that “the international students’ life setting and the amount of interaction with American students by international students dictated the quality of social and cultural learning in the interpersonal relations and external experience dimensions during the adjustment to the American culture” (Farkas, 2005, p.11).

Furthermore, personal-emotional adjustment challenges are another barrier that AGSs have to encounter when attending higher education in the U.S. institutes and IEPs. International students, including AGSs, have to adjust to the culture of higher education just as domestic college students do, which is an additional concern for them along with the adaptation to new policies and norms (Maza Duerto, 2006). Moreover, international students face difficulties when it comes to cultural adjustment in a foreign country, as

Poyrazli and Kavanaugh (2006) indicated in their study about the issues facing international students in American universities. One of these additional challenges is creating new friendships in a country where culture, traditions, and norms are different from in their home countries. AGSs recognize these differences immediately because of the vast variations between the two societies. AGCs tend to be more religion oriented than the other Arab countries due to the fact that Islamic traditions play a major role in people's life, principles, and judgment to the extent it may affect their interface with other Arabs as well as people of other cultures (Melius, 2017; Moaddel, 2002).

Researchers, such as Leshem and Trafford (2007), Moaddel (2002), and Norton and Pavlenko (2004), explained how the Arab culture tends to be conservative in some of the Arab countries and traditional in other countries where it shadows a hierarchic constrain of social-cultural values (Melius, 2017). These two varieties in the Arabic culture can be perceived in the AGCs where some of these countries tend to be conservative while others are traditional. Therefore, AGCs are culturally distinguished from other Arab countries in North Africa and the Middle East. Colombo (2012) indicated that there are other significant reasons making this population unique including the monarchy in authority, the demographic condition, and the high economic status for being oil-rich and industrial countries.

Salihi and Hoosain (2014) explained how Muslims' culture and Arab culture have different practices that need to be understood and respected in the U.S. These differences in practices make AGSs culturally different from Middle Eastern students, and Arab students from Arab countries in North Africa nevertheless, domestic students and other

international students. Therefore, the issues of AGSs' academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustments are different from the other students' groups. The cultural practice and adjustment differences between these groups explain the importance of conducting a study that targets AGSs and underlines these differences to explain the impact of adjustment challenges on the students' English performance (EP) in U.S. IEPs.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

There are many benefits for AGSs to attend higher education in the U.S. However, there are differences in social patterns, culture, and language (Salihi & Hoosain, 2014) from domestic American students on one hand, and differences in demographic, political, economic, and social conditions (Colombo, 2012) than other international students on the other hand. These differences reveal the need for further examination of how to provide appropriate support and inspiration for this particular student population to guarantee their academic success. Furthermore, many studies have revealed results that are typical for all international students: that English language struggles are usually a major barrier for foreign students. More importantly, the studies conducted prior to 2000 implied that English was a key challenge of adjustment, while those conducted after 2000 indicated that though English was still a difficult encounter, the struggles were less problematic, especially for Saudi students (Caldwell, 2013). Now, there is a need for augmented empirical studies on international students' adjustment (ISA) to determine if the trends have actually changed. Accordingly, this study recognizes the challenges faced by AGSs during their study in IEPs in the U.S.

Although there is a big population of Arab students and AGSs in the American universities, that is steadily increasing (Mannan, 2007), there is insufficient research on their academic, social, and personal-emotional challenges in these cultures in general. Furthermore, there is a gap in the knowledge about the challenges faced by AGSs in American IEPs and their impact on the students' EP (Heyn, 2013). Most existing research has investigated the adjustment difficulties of international students as a whole, including problems such as social support (Poyrazli, Kavanaugh, Baker, & Al-Timini, 2004; Sumer et al., 2008), English language proficiency (Poyrazli et al., 2004; Yen & Inose, 2003), and perceived discrimination or prejudice (Araujo, 2011; Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007). However, few studies provide explanations of how students from AGCs are affected by adjustment struggles in American universities, even less on their adjustment in the IEP and how these challenges are influencing to their EP.

In addition, there are not enough studies recognizing and examining the factors of academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustment that influence AGSs' adjustment in the American IEPs. There is a shortage of mixed-method studies on AGSs' academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustment issues and how these issues can affect their academic success. Research is needed to explore these challenges using mixed-methods that give more explanation to the study. The current study provides a comprehensive elaboration to the AGSs' academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustments and how they relate to their EP.

Despite the high number of AGSs in the U.S., most studies have tended to focus on Saudi students' adjustment issues and not on other AGSs from other AGCs (Al-

Harethi, 1985; Al-Jasir, 1993; Al-Nusair, 2000; Alreshoud & Koeske, 1997; Al-Shehry, 1989; Hofer, 2009; Jammaz, 1972; Kershaw, 1973; Mustafa, 1985; Shabeeb, 1996; Shaw, 2009). Besides, these studies have utilized either qualitative or quantitative methods (Akhtarkhavari, 2004; Alanazy, 2013; Alandejani, 2013; Alhajjuj, 2016; Alhazmi, 2010; Al-Jasir, 1993; Alkarni, 2012; Al-Khedaire, 1978; Almotery, 2009; Al-Mulla, 1996; Al-Musalamy, 1999; Al-Nusair, 2000; Al Ramadan, 2016; Alreshoud & Koeske, 1997; Alshaya, 2005; Al Shedoki, 1986; Davis, 2014; Giroir, 2014; Hakami, 2012; Heyn, 2013; Hofer, 2009; Kampman, 2011; Lefdahl-Davis & Perrone-McGovern, 2015; Mahrous & Ahmed, 2010; Midgley, 2009a, 2009b; Mustafa, 1985; Rabia, 2015; Razek, 2012; Razek & Coyner, 2011, 2013, 2014; Rundles, 2012; Sandekian, Weddington, Birnbaum, & Keen, 2015; Shaw, 2009; Unruh & Obeidat, 2015; Yakaboski, Perez-Velez, & Almutairi, 2017). Fewer studies on Saudi students' adjustment have incorporated a mixed-method approach (Al Morshedi, 2011; Al- Qahtani, 2016; Alsahafi & Shin, 2017; Caldwell, 2013; Melius, 2017; Murshidi, 2014a, 2014b). The current study provides a comprehensive explanation of the AGSs' academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustments and how they are related to the students' EP.

1.2 Research Questions

Data gathered for this study allowed the researcher to answer the following questions:

1.2.1 Quantitative Questions

1. What is the nature of the relationship between academic adjustment, as measured by SACQ, and Arabian Gulf students' TOEFL scores (English performance)?
2. What is the nature of the relationship between social adjustment, as measured by both SACQ and SIQ, and Arabian Gulf students' TOEFL scores (English performance)?
3. What is the nature of the relationship between personal-emotional adjustment, as measured by SACQ, and Arabian Gulf students' TOEFL scores (English performance)?

1.2.2 Qualitative Questions

1. What academic challenges are reported by Arabian Gulf students enrolled in U.S. Intensive English Programs (IEPs)?
2. What are the articulated social challenges stated by Arabian Gulf students enrolled in U.S. Intensive English Programs (IEPs)?
3. What personal-emotional challenges are expressed by Arabian Gulf students enrolled in U.S. Intensive English Programs (IEPs)?
4. What perceived impact do such academic, social, and personal-emotional challenges have on IEP students' English performance?

1.3 Delimitations

This study investigated the challenges and difficulties faced by AGSs attending IEPs in the U.S. using a mixed-method research. The findings revealed that AGSs deal with academic challenges, social adjustment, and personal-emotional adjustment and these challenges impact their EP. In order to identify and ease these challenges, American institutions need to recognize students' needs and efficiently provide competent and professional campus resources, services, and facilities. Research conclusions may help eliminate or reduce the challenges and difficulties AGSs encounter in higher education institutions, especially in IEPs. It is assumed that all the challenges and issues faced by these students attending IEPs are important and significant to their success. The findings of this study can inform higher education institutes on the adjustment challenges encountered by this growing student population in the U.S. to improve their experiences.

1.4 Limitations

This multi-location sampling study targeted 160 AGSs studying in IEPs in different states in the U.S. for the spring semester of 2019. The research focused on the reflective experiences of AGSs studying in IEPs in the U.S. Using a larger sample size may provide more information regarding AGSs and help to learn more about other issues that challenge them.

The study used a demographic questionnaire (Appendix B), Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ), Social Integration Questionnaire (SIQ; Appendix A), and interviews to answer the research questions by revealing the shared and different

experiences of these groups. The SACQ and SIQ questionnaires were designed to measure academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustments of students attending school in higher education, however, they were not designed specifically for international students in IEPs. In addition, they were used to compare the adjustment differences between these groups. The interview questions (Appendix C) were meant to find out more about the students' experiences regarding their adjustment difficulties. In addition, interviews were used to validate the questionnaire findings and obtain more information from students in case they had more to share. The use of a different type of questionnaire may add more information to the literature of issues in adjustment and revealed new findings that need more focus in future. Furthermore, since the researcher is an international student sharing the same cultural background as the participants, there was the potential for researcher bias, especially in the interview sessions.

English proficiency was another conceivable limitation. AGSs come with different language abilities and therefore, the responses and explanations varied based on these proficiencies. Students with low English proficiency, based on their Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score and a writing sample or TOEFL Institutional Testing Program (ITP) in IEPs, might not be able to comprehend the questions on both the SACQ and SIQ due to vocabulary limitation. Therefore, all the documents were translated into the Arabic language. Also, students might not understand the researcher's questions or be able to express themselves during the interview sessions because of English language limitation. Consequently, the interviews were done and recorded in the Arabic language. Moreover, the length of time a participant had resided in the U.S. was

another limitation and might lead to dissimilarities in the outcomes. Students who had just arrived at the U.S. might face different level and kind of adjustment difficulties in comparison to students who had been in the U.S. for a longer time.

Some participants might hesitate to participate in the study because of questionnaire fatigue since the initial study had 107 items in total. In addition, the length of time to answer all the questions in the questionnaire might generate frustration and cause participants to discontinue participating.

1.5 Definition of Terms

Acculturation: The adjustment process of individuals of differing cultures when having close encounters within a different culture (Greenland & Brown, 2005). Acculturation starts in the individual's home country and continue throughout the individual's stay in a foreign environment (Berry & Sam, 1997).

Adjustment: an alteration that helps a person work better or do better in a new setting or environment (Merriam Webster, 2018).

Arabian Gulf/ Persian Gulf/ The Gulf Students (AGSs): The countries that are located on the Gulf are Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Iran (Evans, 2018). In the present study, the researcher uses the term *Arabian Gulf* to describe the participants who are from the Arab countries located on the *Gulf*, excluding Iran, which is comprised of students born in the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf. Moreover, *Arabian Gulf* is what Arabs use for the Gulf area (Evans, 2018), so it is considered a more familiar concept to the participants.

Arabs: People who are originally from the Arabian Peninsula who now live in one of the Arab nation countries of the Arabian Gulf, the Middle East, or the north parts of Africa, and whose native language is Arabic (Merriam Webster, 2018).

Culture Shock: Psychological stress and anxiety that arise when an individual travels to a new or foreign environment that has different customs than what he is used to in his home country (Oberg, 1960). It has negative consequences that include psychological and physical symptoms such as confusion, depression, headaches, mental exhaustion, anxiety, and illness (McLachlan & Justice, 2009; Sakurako, 2000).

Domestic Students: Students attending schools in their home country; not foreign or international.

English as a Second Language (ESL): The study or use of English by different native languages' speakers in an English-speaking environment.

First Language (L1): Native or dominant language of a person.

Foreign Language (FL): A language that is studied in an educational setting, such as a classroom, and is not used as a vehicle to communicate with others outside a classroom setting.

Integration: Emersion into a society or an organization includes people from different groups (Rubin, 2012).

Intensive English Program (IEP): Formal English language classes or programs particularly offered for academic and avocational purposes to students with different native languages at different levels to develop students' language skills to enroll in higher education institutes.

International Students' Adjustment (ISA): "A transitional process that unfolds over time as students learn to cope with the exigencies of the university environment" (Al-Sharideh & Goe, 1998, p. 701).

Middle East: A region that is centered on Western Asia, Turkey, and Egypt (United States Central Intelligence Agency, 1993).

Persistence: The multifaceted construction and association between a student and the ability to integrate academically (such as, a student's motivation to study) and socially (for instance, a student's personal sense of fitting in) (Kwai, 2009).

Second Language (L2): "Any language other than the first language" (Ellis, 2008, p. 5) that is used to interconnect with others in academic and social settings.

1.6 Summary

This chapter starts with the background for this study and describes the increasing enrollment rates of AGSs in U.S. higher education institutes and IEPs. In addition, this chapter explains why there is a need for further research on ISA and academic success as well as the gaps in the literature when it comes to AGSs attending IEPs particularly. Research that is more extensive needs to be done to better assist this group of students in their adjustment process. In addition, this chapter states the statement of the problem, research questions, delimitations, limitations, and definition of terms.

The next chapter, chapter two, is the literature review synthesizing research that describes international, Arabs, and AGSs' adjustment issues while attending U.S. higher education institutes and IEPs. It also describes the empirical studies on the impact of

these difficulties on AGSs' EP. Chapter three presents the research methodology, research design, population and sampling, data analysis procedure, instrumentation/ data gathering, and data collection procedure. Chapter four presents the data analysis and the findings of this study. Chapter five discusses thoroughly the results and offers explanation of findings, adding to that the conclusions and implications for future application, research, and policy.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The adjustment of students with different cultural backgrounds to the host country culture and environment is a challenge they face on daily bases while they are contacting students from another culture such as local students (Berry, 1999). Hu (2008) and Jacob (2001) indicated that people who move into a foreign environment experience common adjustment distresses and difficulties when living in a new setting. International students encounter many difficulties such as cultural differences, language barrier, the absence of social support relations, and struggles in establishing cross-cultural relationships. International students in the U.S. face the same problems and much more. Hence, McLachlan and Justice (2009) conducted a study in a private university in the Southwest of the U.S where they interviewed 20 international students to understand some of the problems international students face while adjusting to higher education. They found that the differences between the international students' home country culture and American cultures along with the differences of the educational systems frequently overwhelmed those students. The study also indicated that international students experience culture shock during the early days in the U.S.

The differences between two cultures can cause culture shock. Culture shock may lead to many undesired feelings such as isolation, anxiety, confusion, and uncertainty (Berry, 2005). Culture shock reflects more or less uncontrolled positive or negative symptoms depending on the students' ability to adjust to the American culture and educational system and cope with the difficulties, for example reaching the anticipated fulfillment of studying (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994). These undesired feelings may

develop to unconstructive symptoms such as homesickness, depression, loneliness, more hours of sleep, lack of energy, loss of appetite, disconnection with social activities, as well as feelings of unfriendliness and anger toward host residents (Farkas, 2005; Komiya & Eells, 2001). Salili & Hoosain (2014) indicated that many of these challenges are encountered by international students because of the inherited sets of behavioral rules, different values, and different means of communication and interaction.

Meeuwisse et al. (2010a) stated that several studies exploring international students' cultural adjustment from different geographic countries showed that students from non-Western and less-developed countries had a hard time adjusting to their new academic environment, new connections and interactions with individuals from the host country, and to the American culture in general (Rienties et al., 2011; Russell, Rosenthal, & Thomson, 2010; Topping, & Todman, 2008; Zhou, Jindal-Snape). Mehdizadeh and Scott (2005) and Rienties et al. (2012a) stated that international students who share a closer culture to that of their host society are more accepting, adopting, and adjusting than students who come from a more different culture.

Additional major adjustment for international students, such as Arabian Gulf students (AGSs), within their academic adjustment is their limited knowledge about the U.S. institutions' instructional practices that differ significantly from what they are used to in their home countries (Mahrous & Ahmed, 2010). One of the major differences is that education in the U.S. tends to place much more prominence on class participation and involvement than do institutions in other countries. Kuo (2011) highlighted that Arab students are often not familiarized to the teaching styles in the U.S., and it becomes

harder for them when their professors and educators expect them to adopt basic skills easily and fast, such as note taking and classroom environment.

2.1 Students' Adjustment to Higher Education

There is an enormous number of factors that influence international students from non-western countries adjustment to university and college life and affect their academic performance. These factors may include psychological factors such as student's self-esteem, self-realization, self-confidence, motivation, physical health (Kenny & Donalson, 1992; Lapsley & Mallinckrodt, 1988; Rice & FitzGerald, 1990; Shibazaki, 1999). They may also involve academic factors, for instance their awareness of the importance of commitment to the future career (Tinto, 1975). In addition, they include the academic and societal environment of the institute (Baker & Siryk, 1983; Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994; Rienties et al., 2012a) and students' high expectation of their abilities and skills (Baker, McNeil & Siryk, 1985; Baker & Schultz, 1992a; Plaud, Baker & Groccia, 1990). While it seems that these factors can be categorized in one area, there are certain differences between them as well. These differences may not appear to have a definite clear distinction, but researchers tend to separate them and put related factors in the same category (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994). This categorization helps to apply more efficient and methodical analyses.

The most recognizable categorization of these factors is the examined retention model that was created by Tinto (1975). In this model, Tinto (1975) described retention as an integration between a student and the institutional environment, system, and

settings. The *student departure theory* by Tinto (1975) defines persistence as the blend of students' motivation and academic skills with the institution's academic and social features and environment. The university features and qualities create two essential commitments: goal commitment (obtaining a degree) of students and institutional commitment. If a student connects with the institution's environment and social settings (on and off campus social integration) and feels that they meet his needs, there is a better chance that he graduates (Rienties et al., 2012a). Tinto (1975) proposed "one must view dropout from college as the outcome of a longitudinal process of interactions between the individual and the institutions (peers, faculty, and administration) in which he is registered" (p.103). Baker and Siryk (1989) called it 'attachment' that implies the degree of commitment a student achieves that align with the educational-institutional objectives and goals, such as fulfillment with being in college and contentment and agreement with being in the college the student is enrolled in.

Furthermore, other individual aspects, for instance family values and community background, social status, economic situation, and performance and achievement in high school or educational experience, can affect a student's level of success or failure of integration. The theory explains how student's characteristics, connections, and participation within the social and academic environments of institute essential grounds for institutional commitment are. These grounds explain a student's choice to pursue his academic program or drop out of college. The higher a student's degree of integration into the institutional goals, the greater the student's commitment to the program completion goal (Mannan, 2007).

In 1993, Tinto modified the *student departure theory* and indicated that students experience three phases during the transitional process into college life and they are substantial for college persistence. The first phase is the social and academic integration into the college environment. Tinto (1993) suggested that students separate themselves from past experience, high school friends, and community to be involved in the college community and life. The second phase is when students abandon past behaviors and acquire new ones from other college students and faculty that are applicable for college. Thus, students who have different experiences, norms, and behaviors than middle- and upper-class culture are more likely to face difficulties adjusting to the new environment and college life. The last phase, students need to connect and integrate into the campus social structure (i.e. formal social system, extracurricular activities, and informal social system, peer and group interactions). Students can achieve this only when they succeed in the two previous phases in order to incorporate or integrate into the college life (Jackson, 2008).

In 1984, Baker and Siryk published their article 'Measuring Adjustment to College' that presented the result of a three consecutive year's research. Collecting data started in 1977 at Clark University located in Worcester, Massachusetts, and ended up in 1980. The researchers used a scale of 52 self-rating items divided into 18 items targeting academic adjustment, 14 items aiming towards social adjustment, 10 items signifying personal-emotional adjustment, and 10 items representing the general subscale. The scale was distributed approximately 300 of freshmen students on the fifth week of the first and second semesters of these particular years. In the first year of the study (1977-1978), the

total number of the students who completed and returned the scale was 171 out of 418 freshmen for the two semesters. While in the second year (1978-1979), 147 students out of 389 freshmen finished and returned the scale. The third year (1979-1980), the scale was done and returned by 168 students out of 411 freshmen students in total for the two semesters. The findings showed that this scale was a success and it can not only identify freshmen students who are more likely dropping out of college in future but also can indicate what areas they are having difficulty with and might be a threatening for discontinuation in college. Hence, Baker and Siryk (1995) stated that “the general subscale provides an index of the quality of the relationship or bond that is established between the individual student and the institution, while the other subscales offer insight into the effectiveness of adjustment in the academic, social, and personal-emotional spheres” (Baker & Siryk, 1984, p.187).

On the other hand, the findings of Baker & Siryk (1984) study indicated that the personal-emotional subscale, with alpha coefficient in 0.70s, needs further refinement to be as adequate as the other subscales for research purposes. In addition, the reliability of all the subscales needs improvement if they are being used for counseling and advising students. Therefore, Baker and Siryk (1989, 1999) did more examination of the scale they used before by following Tinto’s interaction model (1975). They identified academic adjustment, social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment, and attachment or commitment to the college experience as the leading factors that influence study performance of students in higher education.

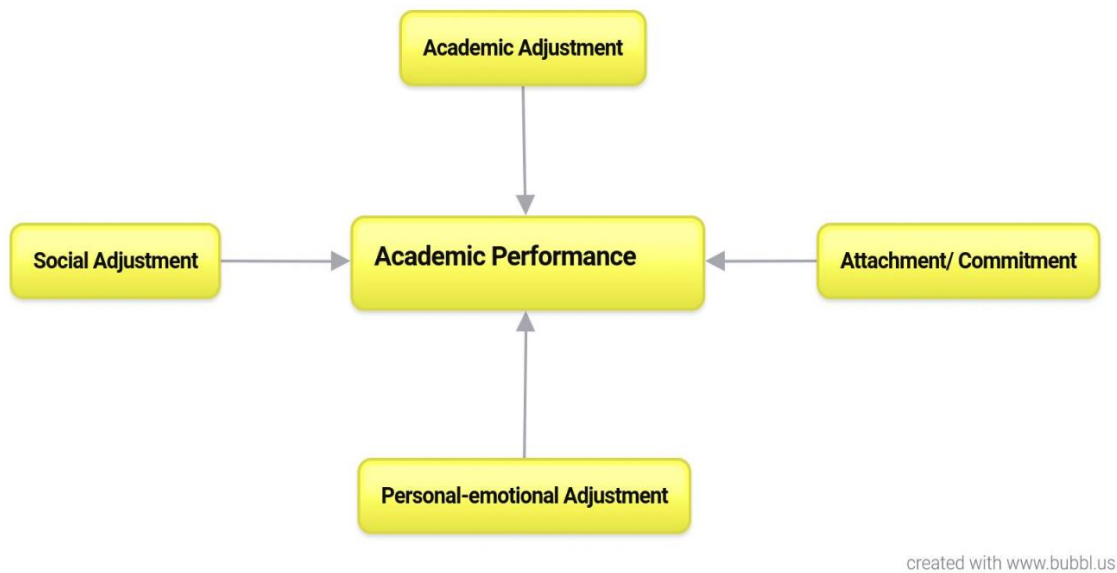


Figure 1: Factors Affecting Student's Adjustment to Higher Education (Baker & Siryk, 1989, 1999)

Baker and Siryk (1989, 1999) found out that there was a strong relationship between the three subscales academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustments and students' academic performance and they were considered the primary aspects that influence students' adjustment. Factor analysis and examination of the interrelation among these subscales in the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) in different studies support the view that there are different factors that affect college students' adjustment (Baker, 1990; Baker & Schultz, 1992a, 1993; Baker & Siryk, 1989). Significant positive correlations were found among the three primary subscales that share a common construct. The three primary aspects of college students' adjustment were tested in different studies on U.S. college students (Baker & Siryk, 1999; Credé & Niehorster, 2012) and international students (Rienties et al., 2011, 2012a; Rienties & Tempelaar, 2013b). These three primary aspects were found to have a positive impact on

the students' academic progress and performance except for social adjustment that has been approved to have a negative effect on students' academic performance (Rienties et al., 2011, 2012a). Other studies stated that there were some further aspects that may affect international students' academic adjustment, their social acculturation, and personal and emotional adaptation to the new environment in the host country (Rienties et al., 2011; Rienties et al., 2012b; Russell et al., 2010; Ward, Leong, & Low, 2004; Zhou et al., 2008).

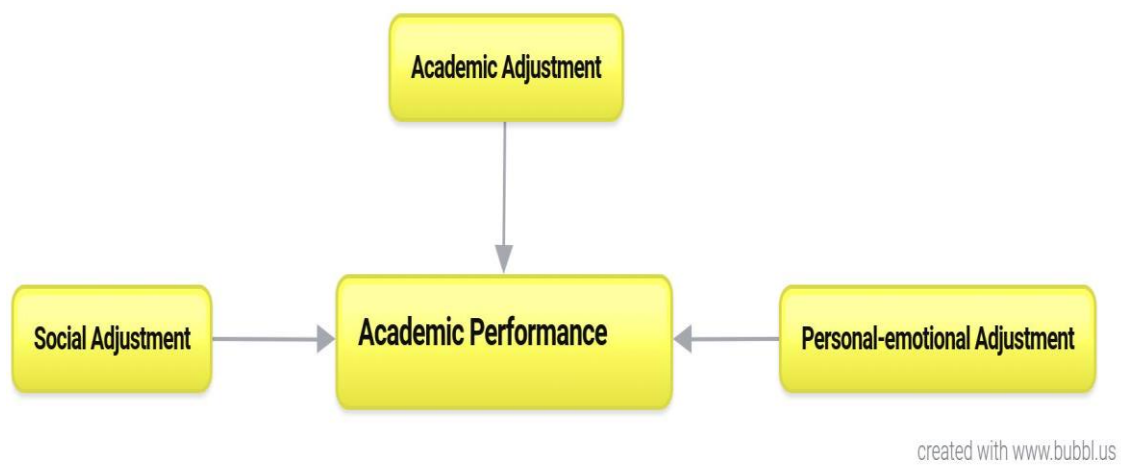


Figure 2: Basic Theoretical Model (Baker & Siryk, 1989, 1999)

Rienties et al. (2011, 2012a) added five social aspects to Baker's and Siryk (1989, 1999) and Tinto's (1975) models that are particularly relevant for international students. These factors include institute and faculty reputation that is perceived by students' social network, constant social support received from family and friends, ethnic origin and identity, social life, and financial aid. These factors were tested in Rienties et al. (2011, 2012a) studies and proved to have an impact on international students' social adjustment to higher education life.

In their study, Rienties et al. (2011) conducted a cross-institutional comparison of 288 domestic Dutch students and 670 international students in five business schools in the Netherlands in order to compare academic and social integration. This study was part of a national project called 'Acculturation' that identifies and finds answers to the problems of adaptation to Dutch Institutes in higher education. The researchers used SACQ to test academic, social, personal-emotional adjustments, and attachment. In addition, they used the Social Integration Questionnaire (SIQ) that was developed by the researchers themselves, to test the other five factors that were mentioned earlier in this section.

Using correlation analysis, analysis of variance, and regression analysis, Rienties et al. (2011) found out that SACQ's subscales showed highly significant positive correlations, as the previous studies of Baker and Siryk (1999) and Beyers and Goossens (2002). They also found that there was a significant positive correlation between SACQ scales and social adjustment factors, except for financial support that showed a significant negative correlation with the institutes and faculty reputation factor. Furthermore, the social adjustment factors, that were developed by Rienties et al. (2011, 2012a), were significantly positively correlated except for the financial support factor.

The international non-Western students showed a significantly lower score on academic integration than other students at the beginning of their academic studies, but after a year, their performance was similar to the Dutch and Western students. More important, the findings indicated that non-Western international students showed significantly lower scores for social and personal-emotional adjustment than the other

Dutch and Western students. Likewise, the international non-Western students scored significantly lower scores on the social adjustment factors that were added by Rienties et al. (2011).

This designates that international students from non-Western background face difficulty in adjusting to the Western way of life at higher education institutes which align with Russell's et al. (2010) findings. Russell's et al. (2010) findings indicated that those students were more likely to face difficulties with coping Western life in higher education than other students. The influence of social support, family, and friends on international non-Western students is more complicated and has more impact on them than other students. These findings indicate the importance of the factors that were developed by Baker and Siryk (1989) and the ones that were added by Rienties et al. (2011, 2012a) on higher education students' adaptation and their impact on their academic performance. Rienties et al. (2012a) said that "Correlation analyses indicate significantly that academic performance after one year is positively correlated with three of the four academic integration scales of Baker and Siryk (1999): academic adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment and attachment" (p. 696).

Another major finding, Rienties et al. (2011) came across, was the negative effect of the high social integration, especially social adjustment, on students' academic performance that contradicts to some extent with Tinto's theoretical model (1975, 1993). Tinto (1975, 1993) theoretical model suggests that students who attain social integration into the campus social life are more likely able to increase their commitment to the institution and are more likely to graduate than students who do not manage to achieve

social integration (Guiffrida, 2006; Jackson, 2008; Karp, Hughes, & O’Gara, 2010; Kwai, 2009; Mamiseishvili, 2012; Meeuwisse et al., 2010a). Metz (2002) indicated “Tinto’s theory suggests that students arrive to college with certain expectations and aspirations. The integration or lack thereof, into the college environment, affected students’ outcomes (e.g. degree attainment)” (p. 6). Whereas, Rienties’ et al. (2011, 2012a) findings revealed that students who spent more time on social activities and ‘extracurricular activities’ (Mannan, 2007) showed lower academic outcomes because they did not spend enough time on studying and being involved with academic activities.

Although many aspects of Tinto theoretical model (1975, 1993) had been validated by empirical research, while some other aspects had not been found to align with his model (Rienties et al., 2012; Mannan, 2007; Zepke & Leach, 2005), results had been uneven (Zepke & Leach, 2005). Therefore, it had been decided to examine the effect of these three types of adjustment on AGSs’ English performance (EP). The current study used SACQ by Baker and Siryk (1989, 1999) and SIQ (Appendix A) by Rienties et al. (2011, 2012) and relied on understanding academic performance of international students published by Rienties et al. (2011, 2012) that are both based on Tinto’s interaction student attrition model (1975, 1993).

Thus, the theoretical model of this dissertation was aligned around Baker and Siryk’s (1989, 1999) and Rienties’s et al. (2011, 2012a) studies. Understanding academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustment of AGSs and how a range of variables influenced by their non-western cultural background, gender differences, affects them

and how they perceive these variables that impact their academic achievement was discussed in this chapter.

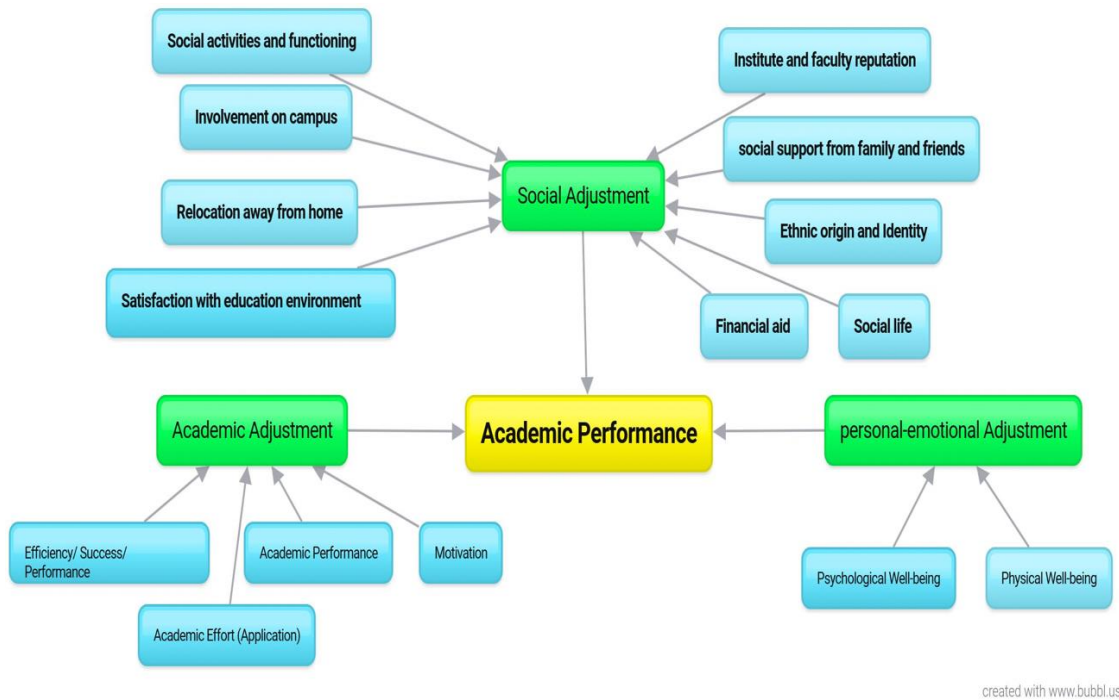
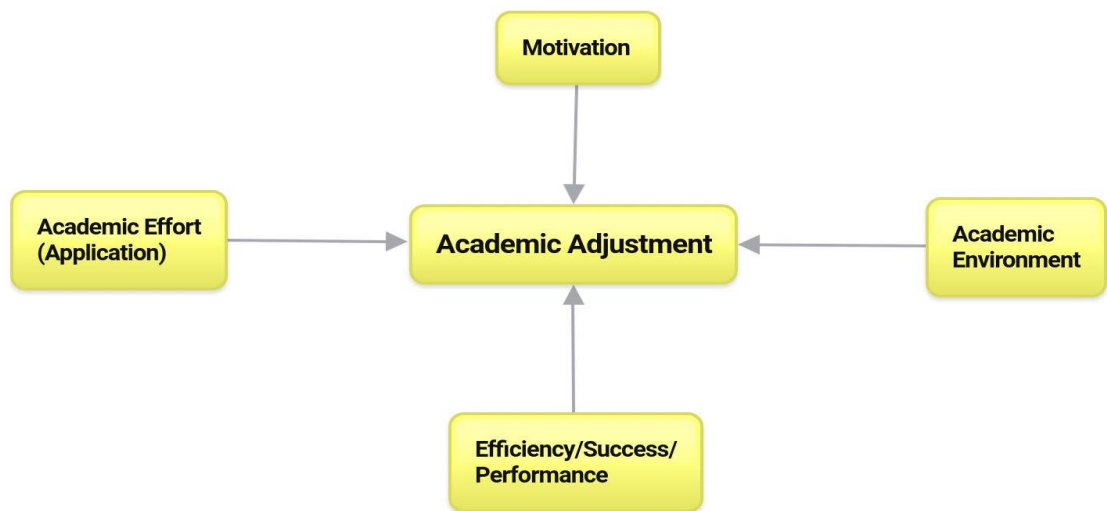


Figure 3: Final Theoretical Model Based on Baker and Siryk (1989, 1999) and Rienties's et al. (2011, 2012a)

2.1.1 Students' Academic Adjustment to Higher Education

In Tinto's original theory (1975), academic adjustment of students in higher education was described as the level of students' intellectual development and adaptation to the academic and educational life. Academic adjustment indicates a student's level of successful coping and adaptation with different educational requirements and the ability to handle different situations of academic life. These situations and educational requirements can be motivation for being a college student, application by doing actual

academic effort, performance that leads to success, and contentment and agreement with the academic environment (Baker et al., 1985; Baker & Schultz, 1992b, 1993; Baker & Siryk, 1984 a, 1984b, 1989, 1999).



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Figure 4: Aspects of Academic Adjustment (Baker & Siryk, 1989, 1999)

Students' successful academic adjustment can be achieved when they have high motivation, belief in their potentials, level of devotion and consistency with their academic goals, and satisfaction with their selected institutes (Renties et al., 2011). The good reputation of a higher education institute on media or people perspectives, who can be friends or family members, impact students' selection and affect their social and academic adjustment (Gloria, Castellanos, Lopez, & Rosales, 2005; Thomas, 2002).

Another factor that affects students' selection of a higher education institute is the international ranking list that catches their attention since they are leaving their home countries and seeking a better education. The higher education institutes know how important the ranking list for obtaining students' attention; therefore, maintaining the

stability of their academic programs is an essential factor that has a positive influence on students' academic performance (Russell et al., 2010; Zhou et al., 2008). These institutes seek to distinguish themselves by giving students more academic and non-academic options by creating an environment that matches student's expectations of campus life, such as social activities, festivals, students' centers, intercultural programs, etc. (Bok 2003; Thomas, 2002).

2.1.2 Students' Social Adjustment to Higher Education

Social adjustment of students in higher education is seen as students' adaptation level to the social and educational life on campus (Rienties et al., 2011). Social adjustment explains how well a student is doing with the interpersonal-societal needs of a study, such as participating in social activities and functioning in general, making new friends or working in groups, rearrangements that are made away from home and important people, and agreement and satisfaction with the social environment on and out of campus (Baker & Siryk, 1989).

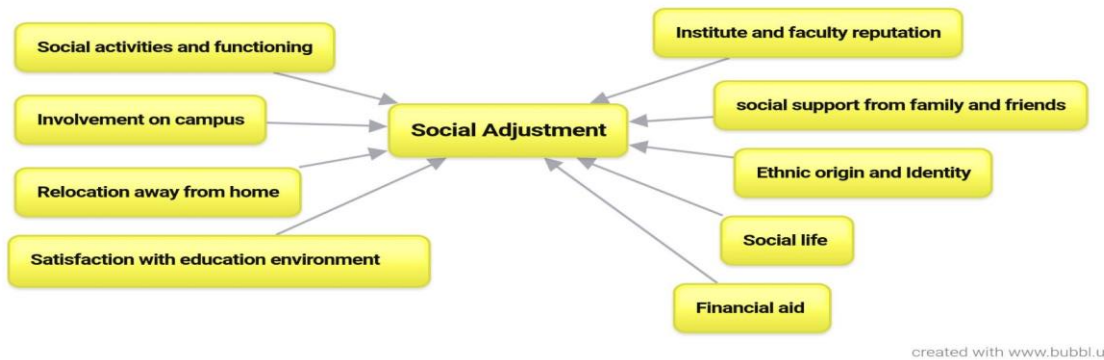


Figure 5: Aspects of Social Adjustment (Baker & Siryk, 1989, 1999; Rienties et al., 2011, 2012a)

Several studies stated that higher education institutes and students' social connections have a huge influence on students' social adjustment, especially first-year students (Baker & Siryk, 1980, 1984a, 1984b; Christie, Munro, & Fisher, 2004; Rienties et al., 2011; Severiens & Wolff, 2008; Tinto, 1998; Wilcox, Winn, & Fyvie-Gauld, 2006; Zepke & Leach, 2005). Family connections, friendships, sharing housing with other students, formal and informal connections with people in higher education, and social connection with students in higher education institutes through activities help to make social adjustment and adaptation in the higher educational environment easier and more effective for students (Jacob, 2001; Li, Chen, & Duanmu, 2010; Miller & Lloyd, 1991; Pantelidou & Craig, 2006; Sakurako, 2000; Wilcox et al., 2006).

Students' thoughts are affected by their family members' perspective and social support they obtain from them since their ideas work as a positive motivational stimulus to do better in their educational life which lead to better social adjustment (Attewell, Lavin, Domina, & Levey, 2006; Cokley, Bernard, Cunningham, & Motoike, 2001; Ozga & Sukhnandan, 1998). One of the reasons that students may not do well in their educational and social adjustment is the disappointing relations with their social connections and environment in colleges and universities that may even lead to drop from their educational program (Bochner, Mcleod, & Lin, 1997; Christie et al., 2004; Meeuwisse et al., 2010b; Ozga & Sukhnandan, 1998). Nevertheless, studies have indicated that these unsatisfactory experiences and relationships are difficult to maintain (Williams & Johnson, 2011), frustrating (McLachlan & Justice, 2009), complicated and disappointing (McDermott-Levy, 2011), and challenging (Li et al., 2010). Thus, it was reasonable when 85 % of the participants in McLachlan and Justice's (2009) study reported in the interviews that having American friends was a slow and irritating process. Therefore, many international students eventually give up on those relations and rely entirely upon companions who share a similar culture with them and/or other international students for social support (McLachlan & Justice, 2009; Williams & Johnson, 2011).

Correspondingly, McDermott-Levy conducted a study in (2011) to learn more about the lived experience of Muslim female students attending schools in the U.S. He interviewed 12 Omani female students in an American nursing school who all reported that they desired friendships with American colleagues. Unfortunately, they felt

disappointed and rejected by others when those relationships did not happen. The Omani female students believed that the reason behind the frustrating friendship was the use of wrong combination of words due to language barrier with native speakers. The language difficulties the nursing students faced made American classmates and teacher lose interest in the conversation and as a result, those students had to rely on each other for social support.

Rienties et al. (2011) indicated that the healthy fitting of higher education students in social and educational life on campus improves their social adjustment to the academic environment and impacts their academic performance strongly. According to Ward, Okura, Kennedy, and Kojima (1998), students' social network through students' union and study or sports clubs is very significant for students' social adjustment. Other means of social networking can be sharing accommodation with other students (Bok, 2003; Ozga & Sukhandan, 1998; Russell et al. 2010; Severiens & Wolff, 2008) and being friend with students from the same nationality or share similar culture. These are effective factors for a better social adjustment that improve the students' academic outcomes (Bochner et al., 1997; Furnham & Alibhai, 1985). Tinto (1998) indicated that these social connections and activities help students fit better in the higher education institutes' social and educational environment that serves the goal of these institutes. Other researchers indicated that students who scored high on SACQ in social adjustment were more involved in college life because of the participation in extracurricular activities (Baker & Siryk, 1984b; Beyers & Goossens, 2002).

2.1.3 Students' Personal-emotional Adjustment to Higher Education

Rienties et al. (2011) describe personal-emotional adjustment as students' adaptation level to the higher education's social and educational life on campus. Personal-emotional adjustment is a scale that reflects the psychological and physical level of anxiety and stress of students while adjusting to the educational institution's academic life (Baker & Siryk, 1999).

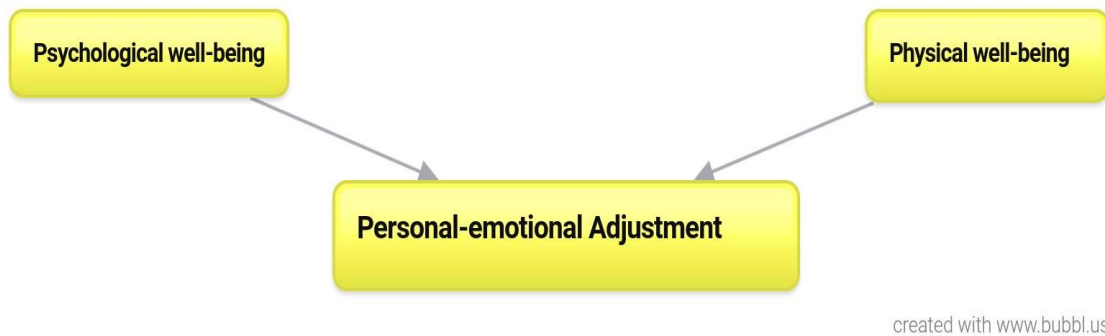


Figure 6: Aspects of Personal-Emotional Adjustment (Baker & Siryk, 1989, 1999)

Adjusting to college life can be a difficult change for many students who want to fit in a higher education institute (Shibazaki, 1999). Chickering and Braskamp (2009) stated that personal-emotional adjustment to the higher education life and environment is a challengeable progression for students. Keating, Guan, Pinero, and Bridges (2010) explained how physical health has a direct impact on someone's mental, emotional, and personal health. Hence, students' physical condition can have a direct and vibrant influence on their personal-emotional adjustment to higher education life. Health crises may lead to stress that affects students' educational identity and end up with emotional crises causing difficulties during their personal-emotional adjustment progression (Henton, Lamke, Murphy, & Haynes, 1980).

Furthermore, Tseng and Newton (2002) and Williams and Johnson (2011) revealed that the lack of social support relations, routines, self-esteems, and identities made international students' adjustment (ISA) more difficult. It even put international students at jeopardy for both mental and physical health troubles. In addition, McLachlan and Justice (2009) stated that 95% of international students experience certain level of homesickness and loneliness remarkably in the early days of their arrival. Levels of homesickness and loneliness varied from inconsiderable to distressing. Tseng and Newton (2002) reported that some international students revealed extreme feelings of loneliness while living in the United States. Similarly, Li et al. (2010) argued that international students experience excessive amounts of stress while living and studying in foreign environment, especially when it differs from their home countries' cultural settings.

Students who score high on SACQ concerning the personal-emotional adjustment are more likely not in need for campus psychological services (Baker, 1993a; Baker & Siryk, 1984b, 1989; Beyers & Goossens, 2002) or seeking psychotherapy or counseling (Montgomery, Haemmerlie, & Watkins, 2000). Those students are not expected to experience personal difficulties (Martin, Swartz-Kulstad, & Madson, 1999) or stress during college life adjustment (Harris, 1991; Mathis & Lecci, 1999; Montgomery & Haemmerlie, 1993; Montgomery & Howdeshell, 1993). Furthermore, their high SACQ scores in the personal-emotional adjustment indicate lesser physical symptoms and having a minimum need for visiting health centers and physical therapy, if needed.

2.2 Students' Academic Performance in Higher Education

Academic performance is the outcome of students' learning process and academic effort during the educational course (Rienties et al., 2012a). Students' academic performance is measured and evaluated differently in regard to each higher education institute's standards, procedures, and policies. While grade point average (GPA) was used by previous studies and it proved to be useful and trustworthy to measure undergraduate and graduate college students' academic performance (Baker & Siryk, 1984b; Beyers, 2001; Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994; Montgomery et al., 2000; Rienties et al, 2011; Young, 1994), the current study did not use the students' GPA to measure their English performance.

One reason for not using the students' GPAs was that the population of the current study were international students who were non-native speakers of English in IEPs in the U.S. that offer non-credit classes only. Thus, IEP students did not have GPAs. Therefore, the current study used the Arab and AGSs' Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score, particularly the Internet-based Test (TOEFL iBT), as an indicator of the students' English performance.

A second reason was that TOEFL iBT can be used as an effective measurement for language performance of English language learners. Manganello (2011) argued that "iBT scores, though not dependable for predicting success in all situations, are more effective as indicators of potential when the production of language and the integrative use of all four skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking) is particularly important." (p. 68). The TOEFL test is used in more than 130 countries, including the U.S., to

measure international students' ability of demonstrating the English language four skills (Vu & Vu, 2013).

A third reason for using the TOEFL iBT scores instead of GPA was this study aimed to measure the EP of the students who were enrolled in IEPs in the U.S., not undergraduate and graduate students in higher education institutions. Nevertheless, TOEFL iBT is not only an indicator of language proficiency it can also indicate that “students with higher TOEFL iBT scores tended to earn higher GPAs and that the TOEFL iBT provided information about the future academic performance of non-native English-speaking students beyond that provided by other admissions tests” (Cho & Bridgeman, 2012, p. 421).

In addition, TOEFL iBT was developed by ETS as an upgraded, computerized version of the PBT TOEFL that would better serve the requirements and expectations of the higher education institutes that rely on TOEFL scores for admission decisions of international students to their schools (Taylor & Angelis, 2008). One of the major upgrades of the iBT TOEFL was the insertion of assessment of language production through measuring the ability to communicate using English in the test (Taylor & Angelis, 2008).

2.2.1 Students' Academic Adjustment and Academic Performance

Baker and Siryk (1999), based on Tinto's interaction model (1975), found out that students' academic adjustment affects their academic performance. Baker and Siryk (1984a, 1984b, 1999), Gerdes and Mallinckrodt (1994), Rienties et al. (2011), and

Wessell, Engle, and Smidchens (1978) stated that students' academic achievement is evaluated by their academic ability or intellectual talent. They also stated that these are not the only scales it is also measured by students' motivation to achieve and maintain their academic goals, trusting their ability to meet the educational requirements, and students' satisfaction feeling with the academic and educational environment.

2.2.1.1 Students' Motivation and Academic Performance

One significant factor that may affect students' EP positively or negatively, especially international students, is motivation. Hofer (2009) investigated the concerns that Saudi students may have while studying in the state of Missouri. The results of 81 usable questionnaires collected from Saudi students and using a mixed-method approach showed that the most crucial challenges included English language difficulties, living and dining problems, and financial aid concerns. The qualitative method revealed the students' willingness for more activities that would smooth cultural exchange and motivate them to achieve more on the academic level. Hofer's study (2009) showed a potential turn in Saudi students' attitudes towards social connection with Americans because of the presence of motivation and social support.

Correspondingly, Shaw's study (2009) of Saudi students in the state of Oregon revealed similar findings to Hofer's (2009). One significant reason behind Saudi students' success in their academic studies was the impression of being part of the campus community. The findings correlated with the overwhelming evidence from previous studies, which suggest that international students who felt attached to the host

country's social connections were less expected to experience adjustment difficulties than others do. Shaw (2009) argued that resilience and intercultural competence of Saudi students in state of Oregon were foundational motivational qualities that helped with the adjustment process.

2.2.1.2 Academic Environment and Academic Performance

The academic environment that requires learning English language is considered one of the most challengeable problems for international students in their adjustment to the host country educational system (Andrade, 2009; Halic, Greenberg & Paulus, 2009; Kuo, 2011; Watkins, Razee, & Richters, 2012). International Arab students, including AGSs, may face difficulties in their academic adjustment because of their limited knowledge about the U.S. institutions' instructional practices that differ significantly from their home countries (Mahrous & Ahmed, 2010).

One of the major differences is that education in the US tends to place much more prominence on class participation and involvement than do institutions in other countries. Kuo (2011) emphasized that Arab students are often not familiarized to the teaching styles in the U.S., and it becomes harder for them when their professors and educators expect them to adopt basic skills easily and fast, such as note taking and classroom environment. Memorization vs. constructivism is one of the highly important differences between the AGCs' learning style and the American's. Memorization is highlighted and appreciated in many countries of the Muslim world. It arises its high importance from the Islamic ritual of rehearsing the *Qur'an* for the prayers and other worshipping practices that

require Muslims to maintain it in its original form. This gives more value to memorization (Henzell-Thomas, 2002) than what is anticipated in the United States.

Abukhattala (2013) explained that Arab international students are faced with many struggles regarding the English language as well as adjusting to their host country's education system. In his study, he explored the educational experience of ten Arab students in two universities in Montreal, Canada. Those undergraduate students were originally from Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco who had been in Canada for three to seven years studying arts, engineering, and science. He used interviews, observations, and document analysis as the qualitative methodological instruments for the study. The findings indicated three emerging themes: teaching methodology, foreign language teaching and learning, and examination. The differences in language, culture, social life, and educational systems between these students' home countries and the host country were the main reasons for their positive and negative experiences.

The participants, in Abukhattala 's (2013) study, indicated that memorization and rote learning were widely used in their original countries while the learning style in Canadian universities requires critical thinking and using communicative strategies through cooperative learning and dialogues. They stated that learning in these universities was centered on students and not the excellence of the teacher. This style of learning is not easily comprehensible by international students since they are not so familiar with critical thinking and participating in the class discussion (Huntley, 1993). The reason behind emphasizing memorization in the Arab countries' educational system is the special fascination of Arab people in poetry and literature in general (Barakat, 1993;

Cook, 1999; Rugh, 2002). Another reason for the use of memorization in teaching and learning styles in Arab countries is the fact children start reciting verses from the Holy Quran early in age for religious and cultural intentions that reflect on their learning process. This is reflected in all subject areas at school even in the STEM, for instance, mathematics, biology, chemistry, and physics. Teachers reward students who show a high ability for memorization performance.

According to Abukhattala (2013) findings, Arab students in these two Canadian universities indicated that their knowledge about the English language prior to their arrival to Canada did not really help them survive and succeed in their transition because of the learning and teaching strategies that were used in their home countries. The way English, or any other foreign or second language, is being taught and learned in Arab countries emphasizes of decontextualized knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, in other words, the formality. While, the Canadian approach emphasizes communication skills and language use in a variety of natural situations over grammar, which is creativity. Nevertheless, the students' written and spoken language is Arabic that has different roots than the European languages, which make learning English harder for them. Therefore, the ability to demonstrate written English is one of the thresholds in EP and success (Li et al., 2010; McLachlan & Justice, 2009; Roongrattanakool, 1998).

Several studies on ISA difficulties found that English language difficulties had a negative effect on students' ability to understand lectures (Godwin, 2009; Jacob, 2001; McLachlan & Justice, 2009), and join classroom discussions or activities such as presentations and debates (Godwin, 2009; Jacob, 2001; Roongrattanakool, 1998).

Correspondingly, in McDermott-Levy's (2011) study where he interviewed 12 Omani female students in a nursing school in the United States, they revealed that English language difficulties were a direct reason for academic problems. Participants clarified that difficulties of understanding American accents, understanding lectures, and coping with the American teaching styles were the major reasons for the failure to participate in classroom discussions and academic struggles.

Another factor that may influence female students' participation in classroom's discussion is gender-culture expectations. Wardhaugh (2010) noted that men like to be experts in topics and that they show readiness for verbal arguing, and that they are not hesitant to indicate their disagreement with others. Likewise, Johnson and Meinhof (1996) explained that there are different traits between men's talk and women's talk. Men's talk is competitive that gives a report and obtains them a standing position, while women's talk is cooperative, creates intimacy and connection, and links ideas. These changes in the linguistic behavior between males and females can be noticed in ESL classrooms where AGSs males try to lead the discussion with their teacher over females' part of sharing. Yopez (1994) stated in his study on how some cultural backgrounds may influence class participation where men have strong oral skills over women's participation in American classroom because of the classroom cultural and behavioral expectations in their home countries. In EL classes, gender has an influence on class participation and interaction (Jule, 2002). Muslim women have equal access to education in many Muslim countries because they are valued and because Islam encourages education of both genders (Ball & Daniel, 2011; Melius, 2017). The Holy *Qur'an* says

that all Muslims, male and female, have the obligation to seek and obtain knowledge (Qur'an 20:114, 35:28, 39:9).

2.2.1.3 Students' Efficiency and Academic Performance

International students' previous academic experiences in their home countries educational systems impose more control than the educational systems in Western countries that make these students feel confused, unconfident and vulnerable when they start their programs in the host institutes (McClure, 2007; Olsen & Kunhart, 1958). International students anticipate a high level of assistance, guidance, understanding, and closeness from mentors, advisors, and faculty (Wang, 2004). Struggles with involvement in the classroom participation is a main factor in the international students' academic experience (Wang, 2004). These difficulties include oral involvement, completion of class reading, ability to take notes while following class lectures (Adams, 2004), and collaborative learning practices (Ejiofo, 2010).

This cultural upbringing may explain why Arab ESL male students in EL classes reflect and position themselves in the classroom more than females do. Key (1975) stated that language is in a continual state of change and the emphasis these days is on the changes in male and female linguistic behavior. Shehadeh (1999) indicated that males and females have different roles in classroom participation related to balancing the authority, interpersonal connection, talk amount in relation to time and who is leading the discussion in EL classrooms.

Ejiofo (2010) explained how many international students encounter an

uncomfortable situation when professors ask them to work with classmates or in groups. This collaborative learning environment is new for them since classroom norms back in their home countries, as AGCs do not encourage collaborative learning. International students may experience culture shock when they have to approach American faculty members explaining that they do not know how to work with other students, or they prefer working on the problem by themselves because they come from an educational environment that highlights a teacher centered classroom setting.

Many pieces contribute to the difficulties and struggles facing international students in classroom participation, test results, and advising. These parts can be categorized into three sets: previous experience of classroom practices, foreign language proficiency and competence, and different host culture (Grey, 2002; McClure, 2007; Pritchard & Skinner, 2002; Wang, 2004). International students are inexperienced with the host country's educational culture. They lack indispensable background knowledge of classroom norms that are required for successful learning process. Sometimes, the insufficient foreign language proficiency impedes their comprehension of teaching guidelines, communication skills, and expression of needs (Abdel Razek, 2012).

One factor closely related to EP is the difference between the native speakers' language and international students' mother tongue language. Language is both the image of ethnic identity and the most reflective symbol of culture (Watkins et al., 2012; Kuo, 2011; Phakiti & Li, 2011). Most of the research that had been done on ISA problems stated that English language difficulties are on the top of the list of problems (Williams & Johnson, 2011). Most research findings indicated that English language difficulties are

the biggest encounter for international students studying in a foreign country (Kelly & Moogan, 2012). Researchers describe English as being a problem (Fatima, 2001; Godwin, 2009; Jacob, 2001; Kelly & Moogan, 2012; Nicholson, 2001), a barrier (Jacob, 2001; Selvadurai, 1992), and a difficulty (Das, Chow, & Rutherford, 1986; Hayes & Lin, 1994; Williams & Johnson, 2011) for international students. While the role of a language is a medium for acculturation, international students who lack competence and proficiency in English are unable to use it to communicate and is considered disadvantage when compared to native speakers of English language (McLachlan & Justice, 2009).

Mizuno (1997) argued that English proficiency is the major indicator of academic adjustment and is a threshold for academic success and completion percentages of international students (Li et al., 2010). Trice (2004) conducted a study on 497 international graduate students in a Midwestern American university to understand their perceptions of the adjustment difficulties in that particular university. In the survey, the international graduate students indicated that English was a major obstacle for them because of their limited English proficiency that affected their ability to successfully communicate and participate in classes. Likewise, McLachlan and Justice (2009) indicated that the failure to effectively cooperate and participate in the academic setting have had a negative impact on international students' ability to succeed. Nevertheless, English language proficiency is not only vibrant for international students' academic adjustment, but also for their social adjustment.

Looking at the ETS (2018), Figure Seven, Arabic language speakers show low score mean in all sections, *Reading* 16, *Listening* 18, *Speaking* 20, and *Writing* 18, and in the total, 73, compared to European languages speakers, such as French, German, etc. The differences in the origins of Arabic language and the English language make it more difficult for Arabic language speakers to learn and use English for communication with native English speakers.

Native Language	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing	Total	Native Language	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing	Total
Afrikaans	19	19	22	21	81	Kurdish	14	15	19	17	66
Akan	18	18	20	20	77	Kurukh	.	.	.	.	.
Albanian	17	18	21	19	75	Lao	15	16	18	18	68
Amharic	17	18	21	19	75	Lahvian	20	22	22	.	86
Arabic	16	18	20	18	73	Lingala	.	.	.	.	.
Armenian	19	20	22	21	81	Lithuanian	20	22	22	22	86
Assamese	24	24	24	25	96	Luba-Lulus	.	.	.	.	.
Azerbaijani	19	18	20	20	76	Luo	19	19	22	22	83
Bambara	13	12	17	15	57	Luxembourgish	24	24	24	24	96
Bashkir	.	.	.	.	.	Macedonian	20	21	22	21	84
Basque	23	23	21	22	90	Madurese	17	16	19	18	70
Belarusian	22	23	23	22	90	Malagasy	20	19	21	22	81
Bemba	.	.	.	.	.	Malay	22	22	21	24	88
Bengali	22	22	23	24	91	Malayalam	23	24	24	24	96
Berber	15	18	19	18	69	Maltese	.	.	.	.	.
Bikol	.	.	.	.	.	Mandingo	12	12	18	15	57
Boenian	18	20	22	20	79	Marathi	23	23	23	24	93
Bulgarian	21	22	22	22	87	Marshallese	.	.	.	.	.
Burmese	17	18	19	20	74	Mende	.	.	.	.	.
Catalan	23	23	22	22	90	Minangkabau	.	.	.	.	.
Cebuano	20	20	23	22	86	Mongolian	17	18	19	19	73
Chichewa (Nyanja)	18	17	20	20	74	Mossi	.	.	.	.	.
Chinese	20	18	19	20	77	Nauru	.	.	.	.	.
Chuvash	.	.	.	.	.	Nepali	19	19	21	21	79
Croatian	21	23	23	22	89	Norwegian	21	24	25	23	92
Czech	22	23	23	22	91	Oriya	23	23	23	24	94
Danish	23	26	26	24	98	Oromo	18	17	20	19	74
Dutch	24	26	25	24	100	Palsuan	.	.	.	.	.
Dyula	.	.	.	.	.	Polish	21	23	23	22	88
Efik	19	19	21	21	81	Pohnpeian	.	.	.	.	.
English	21	22	24	23	90	Portuguese	22	22	21	21	86
Estonian	22	24	24	24	94	Punjabi	21	21	23	22	87
Ewe	18	18	20	20	76	Pushto	18	18	22	20	78
Farsi	20	19	20	20	79	Romanian	22	23	22	23	90
Fijian	.	.	.	.	.	Russian	20	21	22	21	84
Finnish	23	25	23	23	94	Samoan	.	.	.	.	.
French	21	21	21	21	85	Serbian	20	22	22	21	86
Fulah	14	13	19	16	62	Shona	21	22	24	23	89
Ga	18	18	21	20	77	Sindhi	22	23	24	24	93
Galician	26	24	22	24	95	Sinhalese	20	21	22	22	84
Ganda	17	17	21	19	75	Slovak	21	23	23	22	90
Georgian	18	19	21	20	78	Slovenian	23	25	24	23	95
German	23	24	25	24	96	Somali	16	18	21	19	74
Greek	22	23	22	23	89	Spanish	21	21	21	21	84
Guarani	.	.	.	.	.	Sundanese	.	.	.	.	.
Gujarati	20	20	22	22	84	Swahili	17	17	21	20	75
Hausa	16	17	20	18	71	Swedish	21	24	25	22	92
Hebrew	22	25	25	22	95	Tagalog	21	22	23	22	88
Hiligaynon	23	23	23	21	90	Tajik	13	14	19	17	63
Hindi	23	23	24	24	94	Tamil	23	23	24	24	95
Hungarian	22	23	23	22	90	Tatar	18	19	21	20	79
Igbo	19	19	21	21	80	Telugu	23	22	22	22	89
Icelandic	22	24	23	23	93	Thai	18	19	18	20	75
Iloko	21	21	22	22	87	Tibetan	18	18	21	20	78
Indonesian	19	19	20	21	78	Tigrinya	19	20	21	19	79
Inupiaq	.	.	.	.	.	Tonga	.	.	.	.	.
Italian	24	22	21	22	89	Turkish	19	19	20	20	78
Japanese	18	18	17	18	69	Turkmen	17	19	20	19	75
Javanese	19	17	16	18	71	Twi	18	18	21	21	77
Kannada	23	23	24	24	95	Uighur	16	16	18	18	68
Kanuri	.	.	.	.	.	Ukrainian	19	21	22	21	83
Kashmiri	22	22	24	24	93	Urdu	21	22	23	23	89
Kazakh	18	19	20	20	76	Uzbek	20	18	20	19	74
Khmer	13	14	18	18	63	Vietnamese	18	17	18	20	73
Kikuyu	18	19	21	20	79	Wolof	14	15	18	17	64
Kinyarwanda	15	15	19	18	66	Xhosa	.	.	.	.	.
Korikani	24	25	25	26	100	Yiddish	.	.	.	.	.
Korean	21	20	20	21	81	Yoruba	19	19	20	20	79
Kosraean	19	18	18	19	74	Zulu	18	20	23	22	83

¹ Because of the unreliability of statistics based on small samples, means are not reported for subgroups of less than 30. Due to rounding, section score means may not add up to the total score mean.

² Because of changes in region and/or country boundaries, certain languages may have been added or deleted since the previous table was published.

Figure 7: TOEFL iBT by Section Score Means and Native Language (ETS, 2018)

2.2.1.4 Academic Effort (Application) and Academic Performance

International students who move into a new and different educational environment than their home country environment may need to spend more time and academic effort that align with the curriculum requirements and needs of the host country's educational success necessities. Al-Nusair (2000) conducted a study that examined Saudi students' use of effort, time, and energy while attending higher educational institutions in the U.S. The researcher included the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ)/ fourth edition to evaluate Saudi students' perceptions of the college experience, institutional environment, and the educational gains in American higher educational institutes. The questionnaire was distributed to a random sample of 275 students across the U.S. The findings revealed that Saudi students were less involved in writing, social and interpersonal activities, and not spending enough academic efforts because they were not satisfied with American higher educational institutions.

One reason for having low level of writing regarding the AGSs is the notion of critical thinking learning style. AGSs need to be taught critical thinking pedagogy that leads to better levels of comprehension, interpretation, and analysis. However, this pedagogy must be endorsed gradually and carefully to avoid any confusing AGSs may grow since they have practiced and applied different cultural patterns in schooling. Critical thinking inquiries may have to be designed and approached carefully so that students can acquire the skill to react. Critical analysis of a text can be taught through instructional patterns that will open a door for learners, especially EL learners, to explore

and learn (Street, 1984, 1993). The same instructional paradigms can be used with the newcomers and they can observe and track their classmates for a while until they learn how to do it without an assistant.

Another reason for low academic performance is the absence of having a bilingual curriculum in the AGCs since Arabic is the only language spoken in these countries. While some Arab countries have a multilingual environment where Arabic is not the only language of school or daily life and students may use multiple written language schemes or scripts. Foreign languages such as English, French, Comorian, Berber, Tigrinya, Kurdish, Spanish, Somali, and Kiswahili, as well as local languages and dialects, may be used to varying degrees in these countries. Schooling in many Arab countries may or may not integrate multilingual learning, but students are often challenged with various scripts in their daily lives and throughout their journey of learning to read when Arabic language is not the only spoken or written language, in contrast with the AGCs where Arabic is the only language for teaching in K-12 schools. The journey of learning to read in a different writing system than their mother tongue can promote and improve different cognitive skills enormously (Fender, 2008).

2.2.2 Students' Social Adjustment and Academic Performance

Several studies emphasized the importance of social integration in the academic environment on students' academic achievement in higher education (Mallinckrodt, 1988; McDermott-Levy, 2011; McLachlan & Justice, 2009; Pantages & Creedon, 1978; Spady, 1970; Tinto, 1975; Williams & Johnson, 2011). Higher education students' social

adjustment involves several components such as blending with groups and sharing college life, developing social relations with other students, and having social activities together. It also includes socializing with faculty and institute's staff and developing friendly social groups that care for and support students when they face social struggles in adjusting to the new environment or feeling lonely (Hamouda, 1986; Hays & Oxley, 1986; Houston, 1971; Jacob, 2001; Lennig, Beal & Sauer, 1980; Lokitz & Sprandel, 1976; Pantelidou & Craig, 2006; Pascarella, 1980; Rich & Scovel, 1987; Terenzini, Lorang, & Pascarella, 1981; Terenzini & Wright, 1987; Tseng & Newton, 2002).

Hays and Oxley (1986) and Wilcox et al. (2006) indicated that social support of students' families and friends has an encouraging impact on students' academic performance. Baker and Siryk (1999) stated that students' academic performance is affected by their social adjustment, which was determined by Tinto's interaction model. That is, if students have difficulties with their social adjustment to higher education, this will slow down their academic achievement. Moreover, Astin (1993) and McInnis, James, and Mcnaught (1995) explained whom social networks can help promote students' academic achievement. In addition, supporting social integration through social programs such as clubs, cultural events, and sporting activities have a positive impact on students' academic performance as well (Saenz et al., 1999; Johnson, 2000–1).

However, Rienties et al. (2011) indicated that the regression analysis showed that social adjustment affected students' academic success, ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System), negatively. In other words, students who were more socially integrated had less academic achievement while students who were less socially involved

but more academically integrated were had better academic outcomes. He also indicated that “Non-Western students who are more socially adjusted and actively participate in student life are less likely to obtain good average grades” (Rienties et al., 2012a, p. 697). This finding contradicts Tinto’s theoretical model. However, previous researchers (Mannan, 2007; Severiens & Wolff, 2008; Zepke & Leach, 2005) stated the same contradicting results about social integration and academic performance.

Mannan (2007), in his study on students from the University of Papua New Guinea, explored the compensatory relationship between social adjustment and academic achievement. He adopted Tinto’s theoretical model of students’ adjustment to higher education to explore students’ retention problems and applied it on 2400 full-time students enrolled in undergraduate studies but only 516 completed questionnaires were used for his study. The researcher developed a questionnaire that contains two categories, academic and social integration, with minor criteria in each. The research findings implied that there was a strong negative factor correlation (-0.57) between students’ learning and academic development and the ‘extracurricular activities’ they were involved with. Correspondingly, there was a moderate factor correlation (-0.37) between students’ learning and academic development and informal interaction with college staff. This clarifies that students who were more socially involvement with activities and staff are less likely to do well with their academic achievement and shows “the compensatory relationship between academic and social integration” (Mannan, 2007, p. 154).

Therefore, the findings of Mannan (2007) contradict Tinto’s model which suggests that students with better social adjustment are more likely to have higher

academic outcomes while it corresponds with Rienties et al. (2011) findings. Mannan's study revealed "a strong negative relationship between academic and social integration, which indicates that less integration in the social domain of the university was compensated by higher academic integration leading to student persistence" (Mannan, 2007, p.160). This means that students with high academic integration, especially academic adjustment, are more likely to have high academic outcomes. While students with high social integration may end up with poor academic outcomes because they devote less time for academic activities which lead to lower academic integration resulting in lower academic performance (Rienties et al., 2012a).

Zepke and Leach (2005) performed a synthetic study of literature on 146 research studies to see how the institutes in New Zealand can improve students' outcomes. The findings revealed that there were two types of institution behavior. The first type tries to fit students with their existing cultures, and the second type works on making culture fits with the students' needs. On one hand, Zepke and Leach (2005) study indicated that some of the research conducted on this area had revealed that social connections helped students with their social integration that led to better academic outcomes (Astin, 1993; McInnis et al., 1995). On the other hand, some other studies were "more cautionary and warns that too much social activity can negatively affect academic outcomes (McInnis et al., 2000b; Thomas, 2002)" (Zepke & Leach, 2005, p.50).

2.2.2.1 Social Involvement and Academic Performance

While international students need to fulfill the demands of the new academic environment, they fight to overcome the social obstructions facing them as well. They face confusion and misunderstanding that lead to isolation and social marginalization increased by their academic concerns and difficulty in establishing and maintaining friendships with American students (Constantine, Okazaki, & Utsey, 2004; McClure, 2007; McDermott-Levy, 2011; McLachlan & Justice, 2009). Because many international students come from collectivist societies, such as AGSs, the loss of connection to substantial family members and the absence of community support escalate their psychological or social uncomfortableness (Ladd & Ruby, 1999; Olsen & Kunhart, 1958; Wang, 2004). In addition, discriminatory acts and manners are often encountered by international students as not only community behaviors but also felt in prejudiced attitudes of native students, administrators, and faculty (Constantine et al., 2004; Abdel Razek, 2012).

2.2.2.2 Involvement on Campus and Academic Performance

International students usually show little comprehension of the policies and regulations controlling student behavior, social interfaces, and communication patterns because of the insufficient activities and poor guiding and advising services on many campuses (Kher, Juneau, & Molstad, 2003). For instance, students' campus life programs and activities usually are not designed for international students although of their greater needs to social support services (Lee & Rice, 2007; Wang, 2004).

Another major factor that affects AGSs' in IEPs successful adjustment to the American culture is the absence of their families, which is a fundamental concept and need in the Arab countries' cultures (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Without the supportive presence of their families and the culture shock, AGSs in IEPs may experience the feeling of being abandoned, helpless, and isolated. One way to help AGSs attending IEPs to reach the stage of adjustment without being stuck in isolation feelings is by offering social and academic support programs. These programs can also involve domestic students, faculty, and staff to acknowledge them about international students' home cultures and to add diversity and awareness to the sessions that help both sides (Abukhattala, 2013).

2.2.2.3 Relocation and Academic Performance

The differences between two cultures can cause culture shock which may lead to many undesired feelings such as isolation, anxiety, confusion, and uncertainty (Oberg, 1960). These undesired feelings may develop to unconstructive symptoms such as homesickness, depression, loneliness, more hours of sleep, lack of energy, loss of appetite, disconnection with social activities, as well as feelings of unfriendliness and anger toward host residents (Komiya & Eells, 2001; Oberg, 1960). Shattuck (1964) indicated that many of these challenges are encountered by international students because of the inherited sets of behavioral rules, different values, and different means of communication and interaction. The cultural differences between the United States and

the AGCs are encountered by many AGSs in IEPs immediately upon arriving in the US that may or may not be coped with through time.

AGSs attending IEPs may experience culture shock because of the foreign elements that they count in the United States. Macionis and Gerber (2010) defined culture shock as “the personal disorientation a person may feel when experiencing an unfamiliar way of life due to immigration or a visit to a new country, a move between social environments, or simply when traveling to another type of life” (p. 54). Similarly, Rajasekar and Renand (2013) showed how culture shock might cause anxiety or stress that starts by being in a different and foreign environment with the absence of the acquainted marks and characters of the home country. They recognized 14 aspects that were added to culture shock, which are religion, traditions, language, communication, ethics, dress code, rules, food, time orientation, individualism/collectivism, structure, perception, power distance, and weather.

Rising and Copp (1992) stated that several studies exploring international students’ cultural adjustment from different geographic counties showed that students from non-Western and less-developed countries had a hard time adjusting to their new academic environment, new connections and interactions with individuals from the host country, and to the American culture in general. Mehdizadeh and Scott (2005) studied the psychological, social, and cultural adjustment problems of Iranian students enrolled in higher education schools in Scotland and who had been there for six months to five years. They used semi-structured interviews and a survey to collect the qualitative and quantitative data. The findings showed that international students who share a closer

culture to that of their host society are more accepting, adopting, and adjusting than students who come from a more different culture.

In other words, if a student has a considerably different background culture from the host culture, the student will have very difficult and rough time adjusting in the new environment. Alreshoud and Koeske (1997) conducted a study of 74 Saudi male students attending colleges and universities in the U.S. to determine the relationship between cultural attitudes toward and social interaction with Americans. After mailing the participants the questionnaire, the results showed that Saudi students were not so interested to participate in activities with Americans. The researchers assumed that the vast cultural dissimilarities between Saudi and American students, the insufficient contact environment, and the Saudi students' preference of staying with the same nationality group of students made the connection between the two groups unpreferable and challenging. Similarly, Lippman (2004) indicated that American and Saudi cultures are immeasurably different. Thus, the adjustment of Saudi students in both American Institutions and society is overwhelming and a worrisome challenge.

2.2.2.4 Satisfaction with Education and Academic Performance

Several studies have reported that high quality academic support, encouraging educational programs, and institutional services improve students' learning outcomes (Russell et al., 2010; Zhou et al., 2008). On one hand, some higher education institutes bind significant efforts, time, and money in offering and organizing non-academic services, programs, and activities to students, such as cultural programs, social activities,

academic support groups, and community involvement platforms in order to gain students' satisfaction and praise on social media (Bok, 2003; Thomas, 2002).

On the other hand, other higher educational institutions lack sufficient and necessary knowledge about international students' home country culture that may impact the students' educational satisfaction. The wide spectrum of cultural traditions in the AGCs lead AGSs in the American IEPs to perform differently in these institutes due to different factors, such as teachers' and international students' cultures and gender (Salihi & Hoosain, 2014). In addition, the different cultural background and standards of American teachers compared to the AGS' cultural background effect students' cultural adjustment. Therefore, "Muslim students often deal with "home culture" and a "school culture" and lead double lives, which can be a source of additional stress" (Salihi & Hoosain, 2014, p. 39).

Consistently, Saleh's (1980) study of international Arab students' academic, social, and personal adjustment difficulties at North Texas State University, Texas Tech University, and Southern Methodist University revealed that American professors did not understand Arab students' feelings and educational differences in the higher education requirements of Western and non-Western countries. The finding showed that 56.6 percent of the participants did not want to be enrolled in the courses they were taking. Many international students from non-Western countries are unfamiliar with the possibility of students' picking up their own courses, and hence they ask for their advisors' advice (Cadieux & Wehrly, 1986).

In addition to the lack of the mutual understanding between international students and their advisors, many international students experience academic challenges and dissatisfaction regarding the instructional procedures that are used in American higher education classrooms. Class participation and involvement are expected in American classrooms (Aubrey, 1991). Yet, this may be very challenging and stressful to students from the Middle East, Asia, and Africa who are habituated to sit in the class quietly, and to listen quietly while being lectured by professors. The AGCs' culture is "essentially traditional and conservative ... the way in which authority and hierarchy are perceived and used. In turn, these community–social cultural values are reflected in the actions that follow, respectively, within the institutional setting of schools" (Leshem & Trafford, 2007, p. 642). Islamic traditions play a major role in Arabian Gulf people's life, performances, and interaction with people of other cultures (Melius, 2017; Moaddel, 2002). The Islamic traditions are implicitly implemented in the classrooms' settings and norms. In some Muslim countries, learners do not even work in small groups that incorporate both genders (Alhazmi, 2010; Melius, 2017; Shaw, 2009). Furthermore, in many Arab countries, especially AGCs, learners do not participate in small group activities in classrooms since collaborative learning techniques do not exist in schools' pedagogy.

Wan (2001) indicated that in some educational cultures, it is considered respectful when students listen quietly and politely to their professors. However, in the U.S., students have permission from their teachers to eat and drink in class, and usually, student input and sharing are encouraged or even segment of the grade. These differences

in the educational practices between the international students' home country and the American way may generate less satisfaction to those international students, especially when they are not being conveyed of these differences.

Furthermore, dissatisfaction with education may result from the differences in the educational practices and classrooms' norms between the international students' home country and the host country. Many international students, such as AGSs, think that to be effective in a group discussion is impolite. In many countries, especially AGCs, if a student interrupts a professor who is lecturing, it is perceived as disrespectful and even insulting behavior (Balas, 2000). In the U.S., some faculty may sit on the desk or dress informally which is considered offensive and unacceptable in many foreign classrooms' settings. In the U.S. classrooms, teachers are more flexible, interactive, collaborative, and creative, but many international students perceive this approach as lacking a constructive structure (Wan, 2001). Some adult Muslim male Arabs may avoid eye contact with female teachers, depending on their countries of origin such as AGCs in IEPs, because they consider it disrespectful and forbidden in some cultures, to look at women even when they are talking (Melius, 2017; Sobh & Belk, 2011a, 2011b). Some Muslim Arabs, such as AGSs, may not shake hands with the other gender because it is undesirable as well (Sobh et al., 2013). There are several reasons for these acts, which do not mean that Muslim Arabs do not appreciate or value the conversation or that women are inferior to men (Sobh & Belk, 2011b). Therefore, international students need to shift from the strict formal lecture used in their home countries and adopt more critical thinking, efficient

problem solving, and resource skills in order to be effective and successful in American classrooms (Ladd & Ruby, 1999).

2.2.2.5 Institute and Faculty Reputation and Academic Performance

Institute and faculty reputation are observed by students, families, friends, and public view. This reputation might influence students' social adjustment to college life and affect their academic performance (Gloria et al., 2005; Thomas, 2002). For instance, Ozga and Sukhnandan (1998) stated that students who did not finish their studies because of less social involvement and relationships had a lower agreement and harmony with the institute. Institutes in the higher educational notice the influence of international ranking lists on the international students' choices when picking an educational program in higher education (Rienties et al., 2012b).

It has been found that good academic support aspects, encouraging educational implementations, and institutional services improve students' learning outcomes (Russell et al., 2010; Zhou et al., 2008). Therefore, higher education institutes devote significant effort, time, and money in offering and running non-academic services and programs to students, for instance social activities, cultural programs, academic support groups, and community involvement practices in order to gain a good reputation on social media that attract more students and differentiate themselves (Bok, 2003; Thomas, 2002). Rienties et al. (2012a) believe that a well-perceived reputation of a higher education institute by students' social network has a positive influence on students' academic performance.

2.2.2.6 Social Support and Academic Performance

Wilcox et al. (2006) stated that social support by family and friends has a significant influence on first-year students' academic success. Overall, the impact of the family on students' attitudes and motivation in pursuing and doing better in their education is significant that has been approved in educational psychology (Attewell et al., 2006; Cokley et al., 2001; Ozga & Sukhnandan, 1998; Severiens & Wolff, 2008; Zhou et al., 2008). While students in higher education who drop out often indicate that, they did not find enough support from either family, friends, or institutes in order to continue their studies (Bochner et al., 1997; Christie et al., 2004; Meeuwisse et al., 2010a; Ozga & Sukhnandan, 1998). Therefore, social support by family and friends have a positive effect on students' academic performance in higher education (Rienties et al., 2012a).

International students set high expectations and promises beforehand to their arrival to the United States (Constantine et al., 2004; Leong & Chou, 1996; Winkelman, 1994). When these expectations and promises are not met, they may experience disappointment, self-isolation, anger, stress, low self-appreciation, physical complaint, social withdraw or psychological issues which are indicators of their culture shock (Constantine et al., 2004; McClure, 2007). Thus, international students may experience overwhelming levels of acculturative concerns unless they develop efficient and successful adjustment strategies such as academic and social support, self-determination, and examination strategies (Chung, Bemak, & Wong, 2000; Constantine et al., 2004; Inman et al., 2001). While various factors affect ISA strategies in the United States for instance age of arrival, English language proficiency, and academic level only the

existence of support mechanisms is identified under the control of the American host institutes (Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen, & Van Horn, 2002; Wang, 2004).

Support mechanisms lies in three categories, classroom, departmental, and institutional. In the classroom category, the teachers' understanding and support together with the use of collaborative learning strategies have proved their efficiency in easing ISA difficulties (Wang, 2004). Bank (2004) stated that teachers come with a challenge when they teach diverse class with multicultural students trying to keep balance between all cultures and their culture in classroom and curriculum.

Departmental realization of the problems and difficulties facing international students work extensively with the teacher's support and have been showed its help in the academic and social adjustment of international students (Jochems, Snippe, Smid, & Verweij, 1996; Olsen & Kunhart, 1958). Since departments have direct connections with faculty, advisors, and mentors, they have a strong influence on the relationship between students and the educational staff.

Through the institutional category, a coordination of advisors and mentors providing thorough coaching for international students, especially during their first year, and programs that target the international students' inclusion would be helpful to improve their academic and social relationships with domestic students (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Lacina, 2002; Lee & Rice, 2007). Institutions also need to explain the strategies and procedures concerning working with international students to increase the awareness of all individuals participating in the educational setting of the host institute (Misra, Crist, & Burant, 2003). One of the sufficient techniques used to address the aforementioned

challenges and ease ISA to the host institution's environment is increasing the efficiency of orientation programs (Abdel Razek, 2012).

2.2.2.7 Ethnic Origin and Identity and Academic Performance

Nationality, ethnic origin, and identity have been highlighted by many kinds of research on cross-cultural differences between the student's home country and the host country since they affect students' learning process in social interaction (Asmar, 2005; Bochner et al., 1997; Eringa & Huei-Ling, 2009; Phinney, 1990; Yazedjian and Toews, 2006). Religion is an important component of culture that has an impact on people's life because people see religion as part of whom they are and part of their identity (Ember & Ember, 1990; Lacina, 2002). According to Ember and Ember (1990), religion is defined as "any set of attitudes, beliefs, and practices pertaining to supernatural power" (p. 3). Wherever AGSs go, they perceive Islam as their identity, and this is one of the reasons why it is hard for AGSs to adjust into a new culture. They might even feel that the new culture's ethics are the veracious ones leading people to change their beliefs (Al-Sharideh & Goe, 1998).

Usually, the nationality of international students is used as the variable for measuring ethnic identity in most of the research on this subject (Morrison, Merrick, Higgs, & Le Me'tais, 2005; Russell et al., 2010; Ward & Kennedy, 1993). Yet, the large number of researches have indicated that the parents' nationality and ethnicity have a strong effect on students' academic and social progress and their ethnic identity (Gloria et al., 2005; Meeuwisse et al., 2010a). Given the fact that the number of students who are

raised by multi-cultural background parents has increased due to many factors and changes in the world, for instance the internationalization of the workforce in Europe (Rienties et al., 2012a).

Researchers may take into consideration the parents' ethnic background when conducting a study yet, this might lead to a confusion with the student's ethnic identity (Rienties et al., 2012a). For example, a third-generation Egyptian family living in Italy with Italian citizenship may speak only Arabic at home. In any research, this student will be marked as Italian because nationality is the factor that is taken into consideration, while the student may be feeling Italian and Egyptian at the same time. This case "is referred to as a mixed ethnic identity or "mixed-western identity" (Rienties et al., 2012a, p. 689).

Severiens and Wolff (2008) examined the social and academic integration of 523 students from ethnic minorities and majorities in relation to their quality of learning outcomes. In their study, Severiens and Wolff (2008) defined majority students as Dutch personals from Dutch parents who were born in the Netherlands. While, minority students were defined as the students whose one of their parents, at least, was born outside the Netherlands. Learning outcomes were described as the number of credits received in the first year of the academic program, students' average grades, and students' learning styles). The researchers used a questionnaire and interviews as the research instruments to examine the relationship between integration and academic performance. The results showed that the role of the formal interaction between the ethnic majority students and faculty and staff had a positive impact on students' academic

performance. While informal relationships between staff and the ethnic majority group had a negative influence on the students' academic progress.

Shibazaki (1999), in his study on about ethnic identity and perceived discrimination of Mexican American students adjusting to college life, used Harrell's (1997) the Racism and Life Experiences Scale-Brief Version, to examine the impact of the perceived discrimination/racism on students' self-esteem and self-efficiency. He found that there was a negative effect, especially with Mexican-American students, between the perceived discrimination/racism and students' personal-emotional adjustment that influence their general adjustment to higher education.

2.2.2.8 Social Life and Academic Performance

Students' social relationships and connections outside the academic environment have a strong impact on their academic adjustment. There are number of factors that can influence students' social adjustment which may affect their academic performance (Bok, 2003; Ozga & Sukhnandan, 1998; Russell et al., 2010; Severiens & Wolff ,2008), such as having friendships with students from the same culture and host-culture (Bochner et al., 1997; Furnham &Alibhai, 1985; Montgomery & McDowell, 2009; Neri & Ville, 2008; Rienties, Heliot, & Jindal-Snape, 2013a; Sherry, Thomas, & Chui, 2010). Other factors affecting students' adjustment are sharing housing with other students (Neri & Ville, 2008; Ward et al., 1998) and participating in students' associations, study groups, and sports' clubs (Bok, 2003; Ozga and Sukhnandan, 1998; Russell et al., 2010; Severiens & Wolff ,2008). These social experiences and activities help students create a social life that

is strongly involved in the university setting (Tinto 1998). International students who are not involved with campus activities and do not have enough connections with the university academic and social environment may experience significant levels of stress (Russell et al. 2010; Ward et al. 2004).

2.2.2.9 Financial Aid and Academic Performance

Research indicates that financial need is one of the factors for dropout and retention from any academic program that may affect study progress (Thomas 2002). Thomas (2002) stated that 45% of the cohort studied by him indicated to have considerable financial concerns. Meeuwisse's et al. (2010) study revealed that students from low socioeconomic environment who dropout from school were affected by the personal situation or complications in their home due to the financial situation and lack of financial support from family and social connections. International students also worry about their financial situation and aid experience stress and tension (Russell et al. 2010).

2.2.3 Students' Personal-Emotional Adjustment and Academic Performance

Another factor that has an impact on students' adaptation to higher education and their academic performance is the personal-emotional status (Baker & Siryk, 1989, 1999; Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994; Rienties et al., 2011). According to Pappas and Loring (1985), personal-emotional adjustment depends on students' physical and psychological condition, such as self-image, physical shape, feelings and thoughts, and mental issues. Other studies added other factors, such as confidence, depression, anxiety, anger, self-

respect, and somatic health that are significant to students' academic performance and can impact their educational outcomes (Chickering & Braskamp, 2009; Henton et al., 1980; Pappas & Loring, 1985; Sherer, 1985; Vredenburg, O'Brien & Kramer, 1988). Hurtado, Carter, and Spuler (1996) reported that students who see themselves as having and maintaining close relationships with their families have a healthier personal-emotional adjustment than other students do. Rienties et al. (2012a) reported that non-Western college students have more adjustment issues, compared to Western and domestic students, which leads to a lower personal-emotional adjustment and well-being in general.

2.2.3.1 Psychological Well-Being and Academic Performance

Students' personal and emotional complications may lead to psychological troubles such as depression, anxiety, anger, and low self-esteem that reflect in their personal-emotional adjustment in higher education (Gerdes & Mollinkrodt, 2001; Pappas & Loring, 1985; Rienties et al., 2011). Shibazaki (1999) indicated that family support is correlated with lower levels of depression and anxiety, and a higher level of mental health that leads to better academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustment to college life. AGSs need family support all the way, until they graduate from American higher education since members of the Arab culture are proud of themselves for their great hospitality and strong family relations (Hall, 1981; Shryock, 2004).

In addition, English language difficulties generate stress challenges for international students. Azari, Dandeker, and Greenberg (2010) and Hu (2008) stated that

the contradiction and irregularity of English instruction in the students' home country compared to English instruction and interaction in the United States cause anxiety for international students. Furthermore, McLachlan and Justice's (2009) study showed that international students were struggling in having effective communication with both faculty and classmates. The consequences of language challenges are academic withdraw, anxiety, depression, self-doubt, and fatigue. Chanler (1996) suggested that the frequency of English language use was correlated with better psychological, physical and academic health. Similarly, Kaul (2001) revealed that there was a significant correlation between proficiency, stress, and positive adjustment. While studies have revealed that the majority of international students would not look for or request mental health treatment, some indicated the need for both mental treatment and hospitalization because of stress-related illness (McLachlan & Justice, 2009).

2.2.3.2 Physical Well-Being and Academic Performance

According to Keating et al. (2010), students' good physical health and constant physical exercises have a great impact on their ethics, mental health, and their subjective well-being that results in a better emotional adjustment to higher education. Ridinger (1998), on one hand, found no difference between athletes and non-athlete American students in relation to their academic performance when using SACQ in his study. On the other hand, he found that a small group of foreign athlete students, mainly Canadian and western European students, scored higher on academic and social adjustment than the non-athlete students, largely Asian. Yet, there were other variables that affected the study

results, such as ethnicity, home country of origin, differences in home-country culture, and differences in institutional-educational systems.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter covered the guiding methods used for conducting this study. This involved a contextual description of the research design, the population and sampling, procedures used to analyze data, and review of the instruments used for gathering data. This study used a mixed-method design of quantitative and qualitative data that was applied on Arabian Gulf students (AGSs) attending Intensive English Programs (IEPs) in the U.S. The instruments contained two types of questionnaires, Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) by Baker and Siryk (1989) and Social Integration Questionnaire (SIQ) by Rienties et al. (2012a; Appendix A) in addition to a demographic questionnaire (Appendix B), along with follow-up interviews. The researcher reduced item numbers of the SACQ and SIQ questionnaires so as to make a new practical version that was more useful in time and effort. All the instruments used in this study were translated into Arabic language since the participants of this study were Arab students who were enrolled in IEPs to learn English. All the instruments were translated by the researcher and validated by experts who speak both languages, English and Arabic, fluently (Appendix E). Data analysis study were included to address the research questions of this study.

This study had recognized the challenges faced by AGSs during their study in IEPs in the U.S. It was centered on the factors of academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustments that may affect AGSs' English performance (EP) in IEPs. This study intended to give AGSs an opportunity to reflect on their own practices and perspectives in IEPs. It also helped other international students accomplish a successful

EP by giving them the chance to be exposed to the AGSs' experiences. It explored the necessity for more support programs that care for international students' general and individual needs. Furthermore, multiculturalism and inclusion help not only international students, they also raise faculties', domestic students', and American institutions' awareness of the AGSs' background cultures to help them achieve better adjustment in IEPs.

3.1 Research Design

One of the researcher's jobs in a research is determining the most appropriate method for his/her specific purpose of study (Almalki, 2016; Dawson, 2002; Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). Consistent with Dawson (2002), research methodology is the "philosophy or the general principle which will guide your research" (p.14). Bailey (1994) added that a research methodology contains "the assumptions and values that serve as a rationale for research and the standards or criteria the researcher uses for interpreting data and reaching conclusions" (p.34). Moreover, research is also affected and directed by different standards, patterns or world opinions (Bailey, 1994).

Dawson (2002) indicated that research design is "the logic or master plan of a research that throws light on how the study is to be conducted" (p. 308). Research design involves "the entire process of research from conceptualizing a problem to writing research questions, and on to data collection, analysis, interpretation, and report writing" (Creswell, 2013, p. 5). Researchers eventually pass individual perspectives and notions into research design; therefore, it is an essential part of research design considering

potential bias correlated to the study by reflecting upon subjective claims (Almalki, 2016; Creswell, 2014; Hakim, 2000). Research design involves the use of three different forms of approaches: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods.

A mixed-method design includes “research in which the investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draw inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or program of inquiry” (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007, p. 4). Through incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods, mixed-method design allows the researcher to apprehend the strengths of both methods while excluding the weaknesses of operating only qualitative or quantitative approaches. The mixed-method approach tolerates for a more comprehensive segment of understanding and rationalization within a study (Almalki, 2016; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Dawson, 2002; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (1989) stated that there are five principal purposes for the use of mixed-methods in research. These objectives include complementary, initiation, triangulation, development, and expansion. Complementary implies the prospect to improve, elaborate, simplify, and refine results from one method to another. Initiation search into potential contradictions or inconsistencies that initiate from the results. Triangulation seeks to unite and validate results from other methods researching a similar phenomenon. Development looks into the use of the outcomes from one method to support and improve the other method. Expansion seeks to increase the extensiveness of validation by using various methods for different investigation components.

The research design of this study involved a mixed-method procedure of both quantitative and qualitative methods that included three types of questionnaires and follow-up semi-structured interviews. On behalf of the qualitative framework section of the study, the researcher embodied a phenomenological methodology for this study. Phenomenology provided a foundation for “describing the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept of phenomenon” (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). A phenomenological framework gave significance to research by allocating the commonalities among participants throughout the shared lived experiences of the phenomenon. It obliged the researcher to “leave his or her own world behind and enter fully, through the written description, into the situations of the participants” (Wertz, 2005, p. 167). A procedure that refrained “from incorporating (“brackets”) natural scientific theories, explanations, hypothesis, and conceptualizations of the subject matter” (Wertz, 2005, p. 168), was one of the controlling standards within a phenomenological study (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). Eventually, the researcher’s goal within the phenomenological approach was to describe the universal shared bond grounded on the lived experiences, involvements, and practices of the participants in regard to the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013, p. 76).

In this study, the phenomenon involved the lived experiences of AGSs studying in the IEPs in the U.S., particularly how academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustment difficulties impact their EP. This study integrated a mixed-method design to inquire a deeper, more inclusive understanding of the adjustment problems of AGSs studying in the IEPs in the U.S.

3.1.1 Validity and Reliability

When considering data quality, validity and reliability are both crucial, or “the degree to which the collected data (results of measurement or observation) meet the standards of quality to be considered valid (trustworthy) and reliable (dependable)” (Tashakkori, & Teddlie, 2003, p. 706). Carmines and Zeller (1979) defined validity as “the extent to which any measuring instrument measures what it is intended to measure” (p.17) while reliability implicates “the extent to which an experiment, test, or any measuring procedure yields the same results on repeated trials” (p.11). Both SACQ and SIQ instruments had proven validity and reliability (Baker & Siryk, 1989; Rienties et al., 2012a). Data was gathered from diverse participants and various IEPs to guarantee validity and reliability in this study.

According to Creswell (2013), validity in qualitative research is “an attempt to assess the accuracy of the finds, as best described by the researcher and the participants...made through extensive time spent in the field, detailed thick description, and closeness of the researchers to participants” (p. 249). The researcher adopted certain validation strategies to confirm validity of the study. During the interview course, the researcher built a trust with the participants by involving them socially in the conversation in order to know more about their culture while inspecting for any possible misrepresentations in the questionnaire responses. The researcher performed member checking by emailing participants the interviews’ transcripts and requests their responses’ verification in order to reduce any misinformation (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher also used the help of two scholars who were fluent in both

languages, English and Arabic, to ensure that data was transcribed professionally and adequately. In addition, the researcher provided detailed description of the participants' information associated to the study. Reliability was supported by the use of precise and thorough interview notes and transcriptions with a recording device. The audio recordings were entirely transcribed, catching every detail, overlap, and pause (Creswell, 2013). Reliability of quantitative instrument, that was SACQ and SIQ, was measured through Cronbach Alpha. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient value was .95 which indicated an acceptable level of reliability of the 34 modified questionnaire items to measure what they were designed for, academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustment difficulties of AGSs.

3.1.2 Ethics

In order to ensure all ethical concerns were addressed as well as authorization for the IRB to collect data, the researcher followed the approved Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocol from University of Central Florida. The IRB approval documents were submitted to provide necessary information regarding this research project, such as introduction to the research, the research methodology, and potential threats to participants for taking part in the current study. After securing the IRB permission (Appendix D), the researcher submitted the information letter, the invitation email (Appendix G) that went to participants, instruments that were used for the study, as well as permission letter to do so by the initiators SIQ (Appendix F), and the authorization emails from the social media clubs' presidents.

The data used for this study was collected anonymously. Participants taking part in the interview were asked to use pseudonyms. Participants were assured that they could opt out of the study at any point in time since participation was voluntary. During the study, all the collected data from the questionnaires and interviews, such as transcripts, audio files and notes, were stored in a safe and secured place where only the investigator had accessibility to the obtained data.

Throughout the process of conducting SACQ and SIQ questionnaire, there were no questions asking for the student's name, number or any other kind of questions that determine the participants' identity in order to respect the respondents' privacy right. All the questions were designed to gather the necessary data from the participants for the research purpose only.

3.2 Research Setting

This study was conducted at numerous IEPs in different states in the U.S. since they host a diverse population of international students, including AGSs. According to the U.S. universities' websites, international students who have the desire to enroll at these universities must present a certain qualified passing score on one of numerous promising English language proficiency tests implicating the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the Internet-based Test (TOEFL iBT). Non-native English speakers may enroll in IEPs to help guarantee their admission into the universities.

The IEPs' buildings are usually on the universities' campuses, which means their AGSs are not only surrounded by the IEP instructors and other international students, but also by native-English speaking students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate mainstream courses at these universities.

While each IEP in these universities has different policies and requirements, they all agree that international students who enroll in their English programs are assigned to classes based on various English language tests that determine their language proficiency, such as a TOEFL score and a writing sample or TOEFL Institutional Testing Program (ITP). Depending on the IEP's policy and requirements, international students complete their courses during six to fourteen-week terms. All courses are planned to prepare those students for the requirements and objectivities of studying in an American university. These courses include, but not limited to, the four major skills, which are reading, writing, speaking, and listening, though some IEPs prefer incorporating two skills in one integrated skills course.

3.3. Population & Sampling

The researcher surveyed 160 full-time IEPs students in multi-locations in different states in the U.S. The students were from Arabian Gulf countries; Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman studying English in IEPs in the U.S. The population involved male and female students who were 18 years of age or older. Participants taking part in this study were EL students who were enrolled in IEPs as full-time, but not limited to a specific level; they were enrolled in any level in IEPs

during the study. Participants' first language (L1) was Arabic, while English was considered a foreign language (FL) in their home countries. Therefore, they were attending IEPs in American universities to develop their academic and social skills in order to obtain their undergraduate, graduate degrees from the U.S. Students were identified using non-official Arab clubs, and associations related to IEPs institutions in the U.S. In order to secure more participation, the investigator distributed the questionnaires to the participants online through social media and as hard copy. The follow-up semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face and online using Skype with identified participants who had completed the online questionnaires earlier.

The investigator sent out emails to IEP administrations and through social media sites to invite participants to take the questionnaires and do the follow-up interview later on. The email included a link to the questionnaires, which included the information of the study and a link to the questionnaire and follow-up interview request for students who were willing to volunteer for the interview. The researcher sent out reminder emails asking participants to complete the questionnaires, time and date of the interviews, and thanking the other students for participating in the follow-up interview.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis of this study took place after the data was collected. The independent variables included academic, social, personal-emotional adjustments and their subscales. The dependent variables in this study included the EP of the AGSs. The current study included a mixed-method approach for the analysis of the collected data.

Data analysis was managed in two phases, including the hard copy and online questionnaire analysis followed by the transcribed follow-up face-to-face and skype interviews analysis. The hard copy and online SACQ and SIQ questionnaire results were analyzed by inputting the collected data into IBM Statistics Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics 25. The researcher used regression and Pearson correlation procedures to analyze data. The follow-up interview responses were transcribed and analyzed through a phenomenological lens looking for emerging themes (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). Emerging themes from the interview content were identified, coded, and expanded. The investigator conducted horizontalization by involving significant statements from the interviews' transcripts to build a deeper understanding of AGSs' academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustment difficulties related to EP and success in the American IEPs. The results from the quantitative part were then inserted and incorporated within the qualitative results.

3.5 Instrumentation

The methods that were used for data collection in the current study included five different instruments. These instruments were demographic questionnaire, SACQ, SIQ, and follow-up semi-structured interviews. These instruments measured AGSs' adjustment difficulties in the IEPs in the U.S. and the effect of these factors on students' academic performance. All the instruments, except for the TOEFL iBT score, were translated into Arabic by the researcher and validated by experts who were fully competent with English and Arabic languages semantics and syntax (Appendix E).

3.5.1 Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic questionnaire (Appendix B) was introduced first aiming at appraising demographic information of AGSs in U.S. IEPs. This section had 21 items in Arabic language that were direct and easy to answer, either by circling the appropriate choice or writing down a short answer. It was specially planned to examine the information about nationality, gender, age, marital status, level of study, educational background, TOEFL iBT score, IELTS score, housing accommodations, and income.

3.5.2 Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ)

Baker and Siryk created SACQ (1989) based on the students' persistence model of Tinto (1975). It consisted of 67 items that were divided into four scales, namely: academic, social, personal-emotional adjustments, and attachment. The academic adjustment scale included four subscales, which were motivation (6 items), application (4 items), performance (9 items), and academic environment (5 items). The social adjustment scale also had four subscales, which were general/ involvement on campus (7 items), other people/ social involvement (7 items), nostalgia/ relocation away from home (3 items), and social environment/ satisfaction with education (3 items). The personal-emotional adjustment scale consisted of two subscales and these were psychological (9 items), and physical (6 items). While the attachment scale, which was not used in this study, involved two subscales, which were general (3 items) and this college (4 items). Based on the examined literature review, significant positive correlations were determined among the first three primary scales that share a common construct.

Therefore, this study adopted the first three scales, since they were more needed and representative for the purpose of the study. Since this scale had 67 items which might take time, effort, and motivation to finish by the participants, it was modified to have less item numbers with 5-point Likert scale responses, be representative of the variables being under investigation, and to modify vocabulary and language expressions to accommodate AGSs' cultural differences. In addition, the questionnaire was given in Arabic language since the participants were learners of English in IEPs. The researcher purchased the questionnaire in order to use it in this study but was not able to obtain the approval to include it in the appendix.

3.5.3 Social Integration Questionnaire (SIQ)

SIQ was developed by Rienties et al. (2012a; Appendix A) to test the factors that were not mentioned in Baker and Siryk's (1989) study which were institute and faculty reputation, constant social support, ethnic origin and identity, social life, and financial aid. These factors had been proven to be especially effective with international students. SIQ consisted of 37 items that focused on students' social adjustment and its impact on their EP in addition to the demographic items. The researcher acquired the approval from the authors of the SIQ to modify it in order to measure the variables under investigation. The SIQ was modified and translated into Arabic and based on the 5-point Likert scale responses along with the SACQ. The language used in this questionnaire was modified to be more representative of the participants as well as more understandable to them. Some

of the items were removed from the questionnaire because they did not represent the variables being researched.

3.5.4 Follow-Up Semi-Structured Interviews

Follow-up, semi-structured interview was developed by the researcher to obtain a deeper insight of the AGSs' academic, social, and personal-emotional experiences and their impact on the students' EP based on the content from the two earlier questionnaires. The reason for using the follow-up interviews was to collect more data and to validate the questionnaire responses. In addition, the interviews were used to obtain more information from the participants, such as number of the times they took the TOEFL iBT and the range of their scores in this particular test. The interviews were also used to indicate if a participant had ever taken the IELTS test to convert it to the iBT TOEFL score. The interviews were demonstrated in the participants' first language, Arabic, to allow participants fully express themselves and get more information regarding their adjustment difficulties and their influence on their EP.

3.5.5 Internet-Based TOEFL Test (iBT)

The EP of the participants was measured by considering the students' Internet based test score, known as TOEFL iBT, which is considered the most recognized test to measure academic English proficiency in more than 10,000 in more than 130 countries educational institutes worldwide (Educational Testing Service, 2018). Another reason for using the TOEFL iBT was that it "provides a trustworthy indication of a test taker's

English-language proficiency in each of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. It was developed and validated specifically in relation to language use that is typical of university academic settings” (ETS, 2017, p.1). Thus, the current study used AGSs’ TOEFL iBT score as a scale to measure their academic performance in the IEPs. The participants were asked to provide their TOEFL iBT/ IELTS scores in the demographic questionnaire and in the interview sections.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

The current study was a mixed-method study that managed the data collection in two parts. The first part was the quantitative part involving the hard copy and online SACQ and SIQ questionnaire. The second part was the qualitative part represented by follow-up, semi-structured face-to-face and skype interviews.

3.6.1 Hard Copy and Online Questionnaires

In this study, the items in the SACQ and SIQ questionnaire were used to understand the impact of academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustment issues of AGSs studying in the IEPs in the U.S. on students’ EP. The researcher obtained the approval of the SACQ copyright company and the authors of the SIQ to modify and use these two questionnaires for the current study. In addition, a demographic questionnaire was used to collect data regarding the participants’ social, educational, financial, and housing background.

Hard copies of the modified and translated questionnaire were distributed among the AGCs and other Arab participants in the pilot study then collected after students had filled them out. The online questionnaires were accessible via qualtrics.com to AGCs and other Arab countries students studying in IEPs in the U.S. In efforts to deliver the online questionnaires to a large number of students, the researcher obtained permission from various Arab students' and AGSs' online clubs via email in addition to social media for questionnaire distribution. The Arab and Arabian Gulf clubs sent out emails to their clubs' members in the participating universities' campuses inviting them to complete the questionnaires and remind/thank participants for completing the questionnaires and accepting to do the follow-up interviews. Another way of distributing the online questionnaire was through attending academic conferences with several educational institutes in different locations and gathering IEPs administrators' contact information. Later, the researcher emailed the IEPs administrators the Qualtrics link which was sent to their AGSs later.

When AGSs clicked on the link for the questionnaires, they were guided to the information letter. From there, participants were asked to state whether or not they agree on participating in the questionnaires and if their age was 18 years or older at the time of taking the questionnaires. The questionnaires were anonymous, but in the last page, there was an option for participants to insert their email addresses or phone number in order to take part in the follow-up interview. Participants volunteered to take part in the study, but no compensation was made for their participation.

3.6.2 Face-to-Face and Skype Follow-Up Interviews

The researcher contacted the participating students who provided their email addresses or phone numbers in the questionnaires and agreed to take part in the follow-up interview. The researcher met with the participants face-to-face/ via Skype/ phone call for the follow-up interviews. During the separate individual interviews, participants provided recorded responses in Arabic to the interview questions (Appendix C). These questions focused on AGSs' perspectives of academic, social, and personal-emotional challenges facing them while studying in the IEPs in the U.S. and how these challenges impacted their EP. The researcher also obtained the students' TOEFL scores and the number of trials while conducting the interviews. The researcher relied on the shared cultural background with the participants, Arabic language use, and the use of the social, cultural, and religious settings to build a trust with the participants to obtain the needed information.

The interviews lasted between 30 minutes to an hour and a half, depending on the participant's enthusiasm and motivation to elaborate on responses. These interviews were all in the participants' native language, Arabic, in order to get them speak and express themselves freely and comfortably. When the researcher finished the interview transcriptions, they were validated and approved by two experts who were linguistically competent in both languages, English and Arabic (Appendix H). Pseudonyms names were used by the researcher to protect the interviewees' privacy and keep their identity concealed.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

A mixed-method design was an efficient method for obtaining students' perspectives of their adjustment challenges in U.S. Intensive English Programs (IEPs). The objectives of this study were to examine adjustment challenges, academic, social, and personal-emotional challenges, facing students from the Arabian Gulf area, in particular, and students from the rest of the Arabic countries in U.S. IEPs. Through the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) and the Social Integration Questionnaire (SIQ), that were completed by Arabian Gulf Students (AGSs) studying in U.S. IEPs, participants' responses articulated their academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustment challenges. In addition, ten participants agreed to share their experiences in in-depth, semi-structured interviews which elicited their experiences and challenges in U.S. IEPs.

This chapter covered the findings from the mixed-method study, including both qualitative and quantitative data as well as the pilot study. The first section reviewed the pilot study settings and findings. The second section focused on the discussion of the quantitative data findings from the SACQ and the SIQ questionnaire. The third section examined the qualitative results and demographic data related to it from the follow-up interviews. A mixed-method design for data collection protocols was incorporated by the use of the online questionnaire and follow up interviews.

4.1 Pilot Study

During the fall semester of 2018, a pilot study in an American university was conducted to better design the instrument and understand the difficulties that participants might face when conducting the final study. Another reason for running the pilot study was to determine the sample size of AGSs who would participate in completing the questionnaire and volunteer for the interview. The pilot study's additional intent was to assess the researcher's role as an insider who shares similar cultural background and Arabic language proficiency with the participants.

4.1.1 Sample Size and Site

A pilot questionnaire was conducted face-to-face late of the Fall semester of 2018. Twenty Arab students studying in different American IEPs received the questionnaire. The foundations of the selection process were age, mother tongue, and U.S. institute. All 20 participants were 18 years old or older, native speakers of Arabic language, and were students in IEPs in the U.S. Participants were international students from Arabian Gulf countries (AGCs) and other Arab countries who were enrolled full time at different levels in IEPs. The twenty participants were international students from: Saudi Arabia (six males; four females), Iraq (one male; one female), Oman (one male), Kuwait (two males), Palestine (one male), Morocco (one male), UAE (one male), Jordan (one male), and Qatar (one male; Table 1). Hard copies of the modified and translated SACQ and SIQ combined questionnaires were distributed to the participants. Interviews

with four volunteer participants, three males and one female, followed up to obtain more information about their thoughts regarding the whole process.

Table 1

Pilot Study Demographics

Nationality	Number	Gender	Interview	Interview time
Saudi Arabia	10	6 Male	1 Male	23 minutes
		4 Female	1 Female	15 minutes
Iraq	2	1 Male	1 Male	25 minutes
		1 Female	N/A	N/A
Oman	1	Male	1 Male	20 minutes
Kuwait	2	Male	N/A	N/A
Palestine	1	Male	N/A	N/A
Morocco	1	Male	N/A	N/A
UAE	1	Male	N/A	N/A
Jorden	1	Male	N/A	N/A
Qatar	1	Male	N/A	N/A
Total	20	15 Males	3 Males	83 minutes
		5 Females	1 Female	

4.1.2 Discussion of Pilot Study

The pilot test of the face-to-face questionnaire was given in the Arabic language since the participants were Arabic language speakers attending IEPs and still learning English as a foreign or a second language. The questionnaire that was used for the pilot study was translated by the researcher and validated and approved by two experts who

were linguistically competent in both languages, English and Arabic. The pilot study took place in a study room in an American university and lasted for 45 minutes. The researcher was present all the time of conducting the pilot study to answer the participants' questions. During the time of conducting the pilot study, some participants asked for more clarification on some of the questionnaire questions that were unclear for them. Some of these items were modified while others were deleted for the final study based on the participants' feedback and the skipped items in the pilot study. The interviews from the pilot study gave insightful ideas, clues, and approaches for use in the final demonstration of the research. Such consolidated ideas and information increased the possibilities of acquiring richer findings from the current study.

The findings of the pilot study improved the final questionnaire that was distributed in the final study as well as the interviews structure and questions. They, also, yielded valuable information about AGSs and Arab students' experience with the questionnaires and the interviews' questions. In addition, the pilot study gave the researcher more insight on the kind of questions the participants would ask during the final study conduction as well as how much time it would take participants to finish the entire questionnaire at the final setting.

4.2 Quantitative Data

The quantitative data was collected through the demographic questionnaire (Appendix B), SACQ, and SIQ (Appendix A) questionnaires that were modified and translated to Arabic by the researcher. The purpose of these questionnaires was to reach a

deeper insight of the AGSs' academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustment experiences and their impact on the students' EP. The total number of the eligible and qualified online responses was 160 that were loaded and analyzed by Statistics Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. The demographic data charted the frequency and corresponding percentage of country of origin, gender, and marital status of the participants. From the TOEFL scores, SACQ, and SIQ data, the mean and standard deviation analysis were calculated to determine the major adjustment challenges for AGSs. In addition, the researcher utilized Pearson Moment-Product Correlation Coefficient to determine whether there was statistically significant correlation between the three independent adjustment variables, academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustments and the dependent variable of AGSs' TOEFL score. The researcher, also, used regression to examine the nature of the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable. The statistical significance was recognized at the .05 level.

4.2.1 Descriptive Data

Descriptive statistics of the demographic data were determined as the guiding factors for the questionnaire qualified responses. Therefore, it was important to pay attention to them to measure the relationship between the study's dependent and independent variables. Nationality, gender, age, and marital status were the elements which were reviewed as descriptive statistics of the current study. The demographic information was important to the study because it gave insight of the adjustment

conditions the AGCs' participants had to implement in their lives that influenced their EP in the U.S. IEPs.

The participants of this study were AGSs from the Arab countries studying in the U.S IEPs. After the researcher sent out email invitations (Appendix G) and shared the URL to the questionnaire on social media, friends' personal emails, and to Arab club presidents to take the online questionnaires through Qualtrics. The total number of attempted online questionnaire answers was 250. Of those 250 responses, 210 were complete, but only 160 were qualified to be used in this study. The 160 responses were completed by AGSs from the AGCs, while the other 50 responses were completed by Arab students from other Arab countries.

Two hundred and ten Arab students and AGSs completed the online demographic, SACQ, and SIQ questionnaires. Of those 210, 160 responses provided data for analysis, using SPSS 25. Social media and emails were the channels for reaching potential participants. The analysis of the 160 demographic responses revealed that 68 participants (30 males, 38 females) were Saudi students (42.5%), 59 (36 males, 23 females) were students from Iraq (36.9%), 13 (6 males, 7 females) were students from Kuwait (8.1%), 7 (4 males, 3 females) were students from UAE (4.4%), 6 (3 males, 3 females) were students from Oman (3.8%), 5 (5 males, 0 females) were students from Qatar (3.1%), and finally 2 (2 males, 0 females) were students from Bahrain (1.3%; Table 2).

Table 2

Participants' Nationality and Gender Distribution

	Country	Participants	Male	%	Female	%	%
1	Saudi Arabia	68	30	18.8	38	23.8	42.5
2	Iraq	59	36	22.5	23	14.4	36.9
4	Kuwait	13	6	3.8	7	4.4	8.1
6	UAE	7	4	2.5	3	1.9	4.4
8	Oman	6	3	1.9	3	1.9	3.8
9	Qatar	5	5	3.1	0	0	3.1
15	Bahrain	2	2	1.3	0	0	1.3
	Total	160	86	53.8	74	46.3	100.0

The ages of students, who completed the online questionnaires for this study, ranged from 18 to more than 36. The highest age range was 36 years old or more (29.4%) and the lowest was 18-20 years old (13.1%; Table 3).

Table 3

Participants' Age Distribution

Age Range	Frequency	%
18-20 years old	21	13.1
21-25 years old	26	16.3
26-30 years old	39	24.4
31-35 years old	27	16.9
36 years old or more	47	29.4
Total	160	100.0

Of the 160 students, 61 (38.1) students were married, 97 (60.6%) students were single, and 2 (1.3%) students chose the alternative ‘other’ (Table 4).

Table 4

Participants’ Marital Status Distribution

Marital Status	Frequency	%
Married	61	38.1
Single	97	60.6
Other	2	1.3
Total	160	100.0

4.2.2 SACQ and SIQ Questionnaires’ Data

As mentioned before, the Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient value was .95 which indicated an acceptable level of reliability of the 34 modified questionnaire items in measuring academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustment difficulties of AGSs.

Correlation analysis presented in this section aimed to reveal the relationships between the three adjustment factors, academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustments, and the AGSs’ EP, that is the TOEFL scores. Pearson correlation had been used to examine the relationship between the research’s dependent variable, TOEFL scores, and independent variables, academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustments, in SACQ/SIQ. The results showed a significant strong correlation of 83.3% between students’ TOEFL scores and the SACQ/ SIQ questionnaires. Table 5 and Table 6

presented means, standard deviations and Pearson correlations between TOEFL scores with SACQ and SIQ.

Table 5

Mean and Standard Deviation of TOEFL Scores and Adjustment Factors

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
USA TOEFL Score	4.89	2.273
Academic Adjustment	33.26	7.364
Social Adjustment	35.78	8.312
Personal-Emotional Adjustment	30.21	7.844

Table 6

Correlation between the SACQ/SIQ Questionnaire and TOEFL Scores

Variables	USA TOEFL Score	
SACQ/SIQ Questionnaire	Pearson Correlation	.833 [*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	160

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Regression was used to evaluate and reveal the nature of the relationship between independent variables, academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustments and the dependent variable, TOEFL scores. Table 7 showed the strong positive relation between the independent and dependent variables of this study, which was 65.7%.

Table 7

Dependent and Independent Variables Regression

Model	Dependent Variable/ USA TOEFL			
	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Independent Variables	.811 ^a	.657	.651	1.343

Figure 8 explained the linear regression correlation between the independent variables, academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustments and the dependent variable, TOEFL scores.

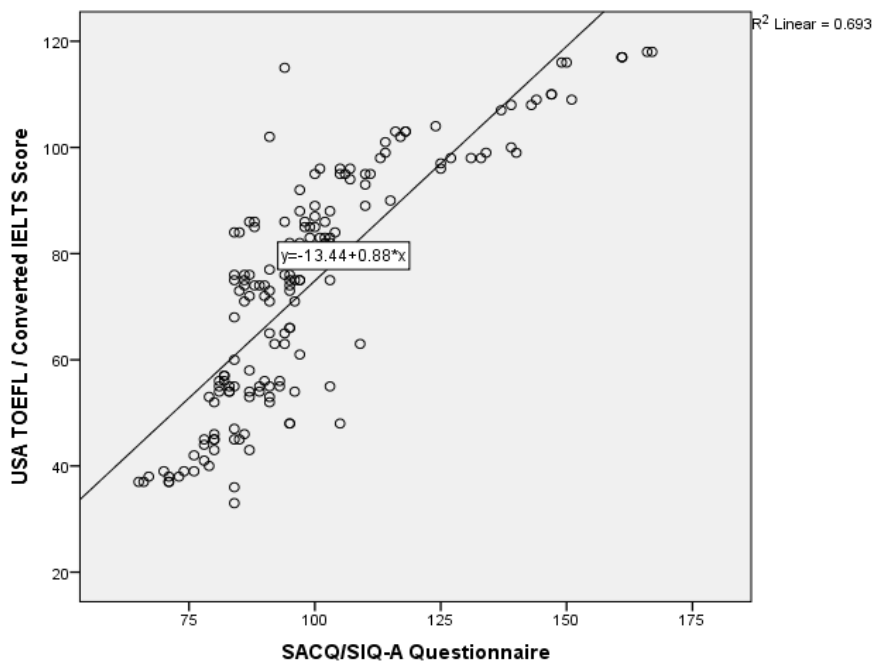


Figure 8: Correlation between SACQ/ SIQ and TOEFL Score

4.2.3 Findings Associated with Quantitative Research Questions

In order to evaluate the strength of linear correlation and the nature of relationships between the dependent variable, TOEFL score, and the independent ones,

academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustments, Pearson correlation procedure of bivariate correlations analysis and regression analysis had been run.

4.2.2.1. Research Question 1

The first quantitative question of this mixed-method study was “What is the nature of the relationship between academic adjustment, as measured by SACQ, and Arabian Gulf students’ TOEFL scores (English performance)?” This question focused on the academic adjustment challenges AGSs faced while studying in the U.S. IEPs. The first 11 questions of the 34 questions in the SACQ and SIQ questionnaire were dedicated to these academic adjustment challenges.

Table 8 presented descriptive statistics showing the academic adjustment total score based on the formulated scoring scale and TOEFL score from SPSS software.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for TOEFL Score and Academic Adjustment

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
USA TOEFL Score	4.89	2.273
Academic Adjustment	33.26	7.364
N	160	

Table 9 showed the correlation between the independent variable academic adjustment based on the scoring scale and the dependent variable TOEFL score. English performance was measured based on TOEFL score in the U.S. The total mean score for academic adjustment was correlated with TOEFL score to show any relationships.

According to the analysis, there was a statistical significance between academic adjustment problems and TOEFL score ($r = .755$, $p = .000$).

Table 9

Correlation between TOEFL Score and Academic Adjustment

Independent Variables		Dependent Variable/ USA TOEFL Score
Academic Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	.755*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	160

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Regression results, 65.7%, examining the relationship between dependent variable and independent variables were statistically significant.

4.2.2.2. Research Question 2

The second quantitative question of this mixed-method study was “What is the nature of the relationship between social adjustment, as measured by both SACQ and SIQ, and Arabian Gulf students’ TOEFL scores (English performance)?” This question examined the social adjustment challenges faced by AGSs who were enrolled in the U.S. IEPs. Of the 34 SACQ and SIQ questions, 12 were targeting the social adjustment challenges which characterized the highest number of questions in this quantitative questionnaire.

Table 10 presented descriptive statistics viewing the social adjustment total score based on the formulated scoring scale and TOEFL score from SPSS software.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics for TOEFL Score and Academic Adjustment

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
USA TOEFL Score	4.89	2.273
Social Adjustment	35.78	8.312
N	160	

Table 11 presented the correlation between the independent variable social adjustment based on the scoring scale and the dependent variable TOEFL score. English performance of AGSs was measured based on their TOEFL scores in the U.S. The total mean score for social adjustment was correlated with TOEFL score to show any relationships. According to the analysis, there was a statistical significance between social adjustment problems and TOEFL score ($r = .790$, $p = .000$).

Table 11

Correlation between TOEFL Score and Social Adjustment

Independent Variables		Dependent Variable/ USA TOEFL Score
Social Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	.790*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	160

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Regression results, 65.7%, of the relationship between dependent variable and independent variables were statistically significant.

4.2.2.3. Research Question 3

The third quantitative research question was “What is the nature of the relationship between personal-emotional adjustment, as measured by SACQ, and Arabian Gulf students’ TOEFL scores (English performance)?” Of 34 quantitative questions, 11 questions were discussing the personal-emotional adjustment challenges AGSs faced in the U.S. IEPs.

Table 12 viewed descriptive statistics that showed the personal-emotional adjustment total score based on the formulated scoring scale and TOEFL score from SPSS software.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics for TOEFL Score and Personal-Emotional Adjustment

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
USA TOEFL Score	4.89	2.273
Personal-Emotional Adjustment	30.21	7.844
N	160	

Table 13 presented the correlation between the independent variable personal-emotional adjustment based on the scoring scale and the dependent variable TOEFL score. English performance of AGSs was measured based on their TOEFL scores of the TOEFL test they acquired in the U.S. The total mean score for personal-emotional adjustment was correlated with TOEFL score to show any relationships. According to the analysis, there was a statistical significance between personal-emotional adjustment problems and TOEFL score ($r = .755$, $p = .000$).

Table 13

Correlation between TOEFL Score and Personal-Emotional Adjustment

Independent Variables		Dependent Variable/ USA TOEFL Score
Personal-Emotional	Pearson Correlation	.755*
Adjustment	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	160

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Regression results, 65.7%, of the relationship between dependent variable and independent variables were statistically significant.

4.2.2.4 Summery of Quantitative Results

Multiple regression was used to answer the three quantitative research questions examining the role academic, social and personal-emotional adjustment played in explaining differences in TOEFL scores for AGSs. Based on the regression results, all three independent variables explained 65.7% of the variation in TOEFL scores $F(3, 156) = 99.690, p < 0.01$ (Table 14, Table 15).

Table 14

Independent and Dependent Variables Regression

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.811 ^a	.657	.651	1.343

Note. ^aPredictors/ Academic, Social, and Personal-Emotional Adjustments. ^bDependent Variable/ USA TOEFL.

Table 15

Variation in the Dependent Criterion F

Model	ANOVA ^a				
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	539.685	3	179.895	99.690	.000 ^b
Residual	281.508	156	1.805		
Total	821.194	159			

Note. ^aDependent Variable/ USA TOEFL. ^bPredictors/ Academic, Social, and Personal-Emotional Adjustments.

The b weights for all three independent variables were statistically significant ($p < .05$), suggesting each independent variable, in turn, had sufficient precision to be retained in the specified regression model. According to the results, academic adjustment evidenced a .094 unit increase in TOEFL score for every unit increase in academic adjustment. Moreover, with every unit increase in social adjustment, a .091 unit increase was observable in TOEFL score; and with every unit increase in independent variable personal-emotional adjustment, a .070 unit increase was observable in the TOEFL score (Table 16).

Table 16

Beta Value of Dependent and Independent Variables

Independent Variable	Coefficients ^a			
	Unstandardized		Standardized	
	Coefficients		Coefficients	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t
Academic Adjustment	.094	.024	.304	3.961
Social Adjustment	.091	.025	.334	3.600
Personal-Emotional Adjustment	.070	.024	.242	2.890

Note. ^aDependent Variable: USA TOEFL / Converted IELTS Range

While the values of the b weights were useful in terms of understanding the unit change in TOEFL score for every unit change in adjustment type, they did not reveal the relative effects of the independent variables on TOEFL score. So, the Beta weights were consulted. The Beta weights revealed that a standardized unit change in TOEFL score with respect to social adjustment (Beta= .334) was higher than a standardized unit change in TOEFL score with respect to academic adjustment (Beta = .304) or personal-emotional adjustment (Beta = .242; Table 16).

A review of the violation of standard regression assumptions did present any concern because the plot of the standardized residuals against the predicted values revealed no (1) nonlinear trends or (2) heteroscedasticity (inconstant variance). Moreover, the distribution of the standardized errors sufficiently approximated normality, and multicollinearity was not problematic because the Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs) for each of the predictors were less than 10.00 (Table 17).

Table 17

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

Independent Variable	Coefficients ^a
	Collinearity Statistics VIF
Academic Adjustment	2.675
Social Adjustment	3.913
Personal-Emotional Adjustment	3.180

Note. ^aDependent Variable: USA TOEFL / Converted IELTS Range

4.3 Qualitative Data

The qualitative data was collected through the follow-up, semi-structured interviews that were developed by the researcher to obtain a deeper perception of the AGSs' academic, social, and personal-emotional experiences and their impact on the students' EP. The interviews were conducted in the participants' first language, Arabic, to let participants express themselves spontaneously and obtain more information about their adjustment challenges in IEPs. The qualitative data was analyzed in correspondence to the four qualitative research questions of this study. Since the fourth research question had a strong association with the first three questions and could not be separated, it was analyzed in correspondence with the first three questions.

4.3.1 Demographic Data of the Semi-Structured Interviews

A total number of 10 participants from different AGCs were involved in the semi-structured interviews: four Iraqi males, five Saudi Arabian students (three males and two

females), one Kuwaiti female (Table 18). All participants' first language was Arabic, and most of them were in the U.S. to obtain an undergraduate or graduate degree in different majors except Hameedah 2 and Hameedah 3 who were in the U.S. to develop their English language skills for future purposes. The participants ranged in age from 21 years to 45 years old, except one female (Hameedah 2) who didn't identify her age, and they were all students in different IEPs in the U.S. After reading the consent form to the interview participants by the researcher and giving them the chance to choose pseudonym names, all the participants gave their consent and agreed to take part in the voluntary interviews. The researcher decided to choose pseudonym names to keep the interviewees' identity anonymous using the most common name in the Arab world 'Mohammad' for males and 'Hameedah' for females (Almaany, 2019) with numerical sequence to distinguish them.

Table 18

Qualitative Data from Interviews

Name	Country	Gender	Age	Time	IEP*
Mohammad 1	Iraq	Male	40-45	Friday 12:00-12:21pm	IEAP/ PSU/ Pennsylvania
Mohammad 2	Iraq	Male	30-35	Friday 3:30-4:00pm	IEP/ CCS/ Washington State
Mohammad 3	Iraq	Male	35-40	Wednesday 6:00-7:00pm	ESOL/ Avalon Park/ Florida
Mohammad 4	Iraq	Male	40-45	Friday 11:00-11:34am	KU/ Kensas then WMU/ Michigan
Mohammad 5	Saudi Arabia	Male	20-25	Sunday 11:00-11:22am	BPU/ Connecticut
Mohammad 6	Saudi Arabia	Male	25-30	Thursday 9:00-10:30 pm	IEP/ UW / Washington State
Mohammad 7	Saudi Arabia	Male	30-35	Sunday 8:00-8:13 pm	UM/ Maryland
Hameedah 1	Saudi Arabia	Female	25-30	Tuesday 7:00-7:22 pm	ELI/ UCF/ Florida
Hameedah 2	Saudi Arabia	Female	N/A	Tuesday 8:00-8:17 pm	ELI/ UCF/ Florida
Hameedah 3	Kuwait	Female	40-45	Wednesday 7:00-7:20 pm	Language Institute/ SSC/ Florida
Total	10				

Note. * PSU= Pennsylvania State University, CCS= Community College of Spokane, KU= Kansas University, WMU= Western Michigan University, UW = University of Washington, BPU= Bridge Pottery University, UM= University of Maryland, UCF= University of Central Florida, SSC= Seminole State College

4.3.2 Findings Associated with Qualitative Research Questions

The AGSs' elaboration on each of the interview questions (Appendix C) were audio recorded. The interview questions were all amplifying the qualitative research questions. Later, the researcher transcribed each of the recordings then translated the transcripts from Arabic into English. Next, the written English transcripts were gathered and organized according to the aspects of the study, that are academic, social, and personal-emotional aspects. Finally, the outcomes of the transcripts' organizing were color-coded, and multiple themes emerged in relation to the qualitative research questions (Table 19). Table 19 represented the number of the interviewees who indicated that they had difficulties with each aspect being researched in this study. The researcher, then, sent all the transcripts, the translated documents from Arabic into English, and the color-coded themes to a fully linguistically experts who examined these documents and validated the outcomes.

Table 19

Results of Qualitative Research Questions

Participant	Research Questions 1 + 4				Research Questions 2 + 4	Research Questions 3 + 4	
	Motivation	Academic Environment	Students' Efficiency	Academic Effort	Social Adjustment	Psychological Well-Being	Physical Well-Being
Mohammad 1	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Mohammad 2	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Mohammad 3	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Mohammad 4	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Mohammad 5	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Mohammad 6	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Mohammad 7	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hameedah 1	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Hameedah 2	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Hameedah 3	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Total	10	10	10	10	10	10	1

4.3.2.1 Research Question 1 and Research Question 4

The first qualitative question of this mixed-method study was “What academic challenges are reported by Arabian Gulf students enrolled in U.S. Intensive English Programs (IEPs)?” This question focused on the academic adjustment difficulties faced by AGSs who were enrolled in IEPs. The follow-up semi-structured interviews were used to collect data for this research question. The researcher raised a general question regarding the participants’ experience and any kind of academic challenges they faced with the American academic environment while studying in the IEPs. All the 10 interviewees stated that they had academic struggles with motivation, academic environment, academic efficiency, and academic effort that effected their EP.

4.3.2.1.1. Motivation

All 10 participants indicated that the lack of language competence and/or fluency were the reasons behind their struggle with their academic adjustment that restrained their academic motivation and led to lower academic performance (Table 20). These findings of the struggle with language fluency corresponded with the results of the previous research done in the same area. The participants in the follow-up interviews explained how the absence of English language competence was a challenge for them for different reasons. Some of these reasons were the limited background in English Language, the American accent vs. the British accent and expressions, the fear of making language mistakes, the absence of the sufficient vocabulary, and the desire for more English comprehension. All these challenges made AGSs interviewees feel unmotivated to use

English language on daily bases that eventually effected their EP. For instance, the Iraqi student Mohammad 1 who elaborated on the reasons behind his low English proficiency level and lack of motivation of using English;

Language was a huge problem for me, and I think all my generation have this problem. I came to the U.S. knowing the English letters only. In Iraq, I never studied English at college ... language was the big problem because of my limited English language. I didn't want to use English.

Table 20

Interviewees' Quotations of Absence of Motivation

Name	Country	IEP	Quotation
Mohammad 1	Iraq	PSU	"The problem was most of the students were Arabs and we were using Arabic language most of the time which didn't help us develop English."
Mohammad 2	Iraq	CCS	"The educational culture is very different like the accent, vocabulary, and concepts between the British and American. For example, the pronunciation of the word 'stop'."
Mohammad 4	Iraq	KU & WMU	"I never took the TOEFL before or even study academic language in Iraq, so I had a shock." "There are words with more than one meaning or indication and that made me confused, like 'recession' that have different meanings which I can't connect to the whole text." "I don't like learning language even Arabic so learning English was a problem for me."
Mohammad 5	Saudi Arabia	BPU	"... except for being shy to use the language that I may make mistakes."
Mohammad 6	Saudi Arabia	UW	"My language was very poor and basic."
Mohammad 7	Saudi Arabia	UM	"Language wasn't hard or a concern for me. Vocabulary was a problem for me."
Hameedah 1	Saudi Arabia	UCF	"I came to the US. to develop my English language skills because they are really basics."
Hameedah 2	Saudi Arabia	UCF	"With that being said, I can't say that there was no improvement, but it wasn't as I wanted it to be or it didn't match my ambition." "... they had classes that had Arab students only and they were from the same program [BLCSI]." "Most of the students in the institute were from South America even in the conversation hours where they brought people to help us practice English with them, those people were Spanish speakers and they had an accent that didn't sound like Americans." "language was a struggle for me."
Hameedah 3	Kuwait	SSC	"Language was different for me."

Activities on/off campus could motivate Arab students to be more involved and reach a better academic achievement. On one hand, six of the interviewees stated that they were hoping for more activities that would ease the cultural exchange and motivate them to achieve better on the academic level (Table 21).

Table 21

Interviewees' Quotations of Limited Academic Activities

Name	Country	IEP	Quotation
Mohammad 1	Iraq	PSU	"We had limited group activities because of the time limit and sometimes we did few outside class activities, but they were still limited."
Mohammad 2	Iraq	CCS	"We didn't have many group collaborative projects in level five."
Mohammad 4	Iraq	KU & WMU	"... but class projects were limited not many."
Mohammad 6	Saudi Arabia	UW	"There isn't really that collaborative relation, it is only about doing homework."
Hameedah 1	Saudi Arabia	UCF	"Not as many only few and these activities were with other international students in the IEP."
Hameedah 3	Kuwait	SSC	"There were some activities but not many. I didn't participate with activities outside the language institute."

On the other hand, two of the interviewees stated that they were satisfied with the number of the activities the IEPs were offering (Table 22).

Table 22

Interviewees' Quotations of Academic Activities

Name	Country	IEP	Quotation
Mohammad 7	Saudi Arabia	UM	"Almost every two weeks, the IEP would do a trip to DC or New York. I participated in most of them."
Hameedah 2	Saudi Arabia	UCF	"A lot of activities and I used to participate in most of these activities"

4.3.2.1.2. Academic Environment

The differences in the education system between the student's home country and the U.S. as well as the limited knowledge about the U.S. institutions' instructional practices could be a substantial reason for struggles with the academic adjustment (Mahrous & Ahmed, 2010). All the 10 interviewees indicated that differences in teaching styles, teaching methodology, examination procedures, classroom norms, and memorization vs. constructivism made it harder for them to adjust academically with the American education. In addition, the 10 interviewees stated that their limited knowledge of adopting learning basic skills, participating in classroom activities, understanding American accents and lectures, and coping with the American teaching styles were crucial reasons for the academic struggles (Table 23). Mohammad 2 indicated how the accent of the American teachers in the IEP, limited vocabulary knowledge, and the differences in the education system delayed his academic adjustment and eventually effected his English performance (EP);

There is a huge difference. The educational culture is very different like the accent, vocabulary, and concepts between the British and American. For example, the pronunciation of the word 'stop'. In Iraq it is reading listening and writing while here it is conversation and not grammar.

Table 23

Interviewees' Quotations of Academic Environment

Name	Country	IEP	Quotation
Mohammad 1	Iraq	PSU	"In Iraq, I never studied English at college."
Mohammad 4	Iraq	KU & WMU	"In Iraq, we study stories in high school by memorizing them without learning the language so the way of teaching English there is not professional. In the US, you apply what you are learning and not only theoretical and reading books like in my major, applied economics." "Study nature and concepts are different from what I learnt."
Mohammad 5	Saudi Arabia	BPU	"In the US, they ask us to write papers and submit them online instead of giving us daily homework and it is, usually, 3 papers or more. The majority of teachers in Saudi Arabia ask for hard copies of the assignments because, for them, they are easy to grade while here [in the U.S.] the majority are asking for online."
Mohammad 6	Saudi Arabia	UW	"In the IEP, they focus on reading and writing but not speaking or communication." "This system is different and difficult for me. I had a class called "academic listening and writing" about note taking which was new for me and I never had something like that in Saudi Arabia."
Mohammad 7	Saudi Arabia	UM	"It was hard to understand some of the American expressions that I wasn't used to since I am from an Arabic country."
Hameedah 1	Saudi Arabia	UCF	"The only difference in the IEP is that it is mixed-gender classes in the U.S. while in Saudi Arabia the classes are like offices and they are not developed or equipped as well as the buildings are poor."
Hameedah 2	Saudi Arabia	UCF	"There is a big difference between the education in Saudi Arabia and in the US. There are no mixed classes in Saudi universities except in some colleges of medicine." "They [ELI/ UCF] never taught us about spelling or even give us a list of vocabulary that we need to memorize every day." "... Sometimes, they didn't understand my accent and they apologized that led to embarrassment."
Hameedah 3	Kuwait	SSC	"The level of education in the US is higher."

4.3.2.1.3 Students' Efficiency

International students who do not have efficient competence and proficiency in English are unable to use the language to communicate, thus, it is considered disadvantage when it comes to involvement in the classroom participation (McLachlan & Justice, 2009; Wang, 2004). As mentioned previously, all the 10 interviewees stated that they had struggled with the use of English to communicate with others in different situations because of the insufficient competence of the language. This struggle with language use was clearly acknowledged by the participants who were hesitating and feeling uncomfortable to use English in the classroom. This problem led to less efficient participation and involvement with colleagues and teachers in classroom, insufficient oral involvement, incompetence of class reading, inability to take notes which eventually effected the students' academic adjustment. For instance, Mohammad 1 mentioned that;

The institute didn't ask us to mingle with native speakers, Americans. ... we didn't have conversations with native speakers on the academic level. I was stressed and felt uncomfortable talking to others because I was expected to use academic language.

Many parts contributed to the difficulties and struggles facing Arab students, including AGSs, in classroom participation, test results, and advising. One of these parts was that Arab students expected a high level of assistance, guidance, understanding, and closeness from mentors, advisors, and faculty (Wang, 2004). Eight of the interviewees implied that the support they got from their teachers, IEPs' administrators, and advisors helped them with their academic adjustment in the American IEPs (Table 24).

Table 24

Interviewees' Quotations of Academic Support

Name	Country	IEP	Quotation
Mohammad 1	Iraq	PSU	"I got support from my teachers in the IEP."
Mohammad 2	Iraq	CCS	<p>"I asked my teacher for a grammar book and he gave me a new one that was printed in 2014 or so at that time compared to the ones we have in Iraq that are very old (like 1990)."</p> <p>"I had a very good teacher and I consider myself lucky (level 5)."</p> <p>"My relationship with the teachers and colleagues was so good."</p> <p>"Sometimes we had native speakers in groups of conversation. We used to love this activity because it helped us with conversation."</p>
Mohammad 4	Iraq	KU & WMU	"Yes, they [teachers] understand the difficulties we go through."
Mohammad 5	Saudi Arabia	BPU	<p>"Yes, I was having enough support from my colleagues and teachers in the English institute."</p> <p>"I didn't find any problem with the group projects because the teachers were so helpful."</p> <p>"... the connection with the advisor was very good because I had more time with him ... but there were not many advisors to cover all the students."</p>
Mohammad 7	Saudi Arabia	UM	<p>"Teachers in the U.S. help students to study and understand to succeed in their studies. In the IEP, the teachers were a little restrict."</p> <p>"Relatively, I had support from my teachers and colleagues to some extent."</p>
Hameedah 2	Saudi Arabia	UCF	"The teachers were always helpful when I needed their help. Some colleagues, who were all from Saudi Arabia, were helpful others were not."
Hameedah 3	Kuwait	SSC	"I have a good support from my teachers when I have questions."

While two interviewees stated that they didn't get enough academic support from their EL teachers, advisor, or the IEP administrators where they were enrolled. Hameedah 1 decided to move into another IEP in a different state because;

I didn't have enough academic support from my teachers and colleagues, so I had to do more academically. ... I was registering in the IEP in Tennessee and they didn't treat me good. ... Now, I am not in the academic level that matches my English competence and the administrators [ELI/ UCF] refuse to change my level and switch to a higher level.

Mohammad 6 indicated that he was not getting the support he was expecting from his EL teachers which hold his English proficiency back;

They [EL teachers] give us textbooks and tell us to study without doing academic activities. The teachers used to tell us "go home, open your book, read and do your homework, then come next day to compare the answers. On campus, I might have some concerns. For example, one of the language teachers made me feel that he wasn't really welcoming to Arab students, This teacher wasn't really helping us or giving us feedback ... He had negative feelings toward me, and I failed his class. I even told the administrators, but they did nothing to help me out until I went to the director of the IEP.

4.3.2.1.4 Academic Effort (Application)

School curriculum in Arab countries may or may not incorporate bilingual or multilingual learning, but students are often faced with various scripts in their daily lives and throughout their journey of learning to read and write when Arabic language is not the only spoken or written language. Whereas, in the AGCs, Arabic is the only language for teaching and instructing in K-12 schools. The 10 interviewees indicated that they were less involved in writing, social and interpersonal activities, and not spending enough academic efforts because they were less satisfied with American IEPs (Table 25).

Table 25

Interviewees' Quotations of Satisfaction with American IEPs

Name	Country	IEP	Quotation
Mohammad 1	Iraq	PSU	<p>"The language institute focused on the academic English use and didn't really care about us using Arabic language most of the time."</p> <p>"... the people working there [center for international students] were mostly Chinese not Americans that didn't really help us learn English a lot."</p> <p>"We sometimes felt that the IEP was only business and we felt they didn't really care."</p>
Mohammad 2	Iraq	CCS	"The subjects she used to teach us were from real life situations that helped us socially not only academically."
Mohammad 4	Iraq	KU & WMU	"For language institute, I don't advice anyone to study in the language institute in [...], but the one in Kansas, yes, I advise my friends to study there."
Mohammad 5	Saudi Arabia	BPU	"... a teacher who treated me with racism which was personal and led to low grades in his class only."
Mohammad 6	Saudi Arabia	UW	<p>"The support I am getting from teachers is a relative topic that depends on the teacher's personality."</p> <p>"There are some IEPs that don't care about their international students, all they care about is how much money they get."</p>
Mohammad 7	Saudi Arabia	UM	"The university was offering services, like psychological or academic centers, but the language institute didn't offer them."
Hameedah 1	Saudi Arabia	UCF	<p>"... so I felt that I was really in an academic environment and institute."</p> <p>"In the US, some of the English language institutes care more about financial support (money) than education."</p> <p>"... that made me cry and change the school to Philadelphia then I moved to Florida."</p> <p>"Because the Saudi government pay for their students to study in the US IEPs, the IEPs make use (benefit) from this ..."</p> <p>"I am not in the academic level that match my English competence ..."</p>

Name	Country	IEP	Quotation
Hameedah 2	Saudi Arabia	UCF	“Regarding language teaching, I didn’t feel that the language institute was that good in teaching English language” “I wish that ELI/ UCF had the rule of ‘Arabic is prohibited inside the building’ so we could develop our English skills.”
Hameedah 3	Kuwait	SSC	“There are no group projects.”

4.3.2.2 Research Question 2 and Research Question 4

The second qualitative question of this mixed-method study was “What are the articulated social challenges stated by Arabian Gulf students enrolled in U.S. Intensive English Programs (IEP)?” This question examined the social adjustment challenges faced by AGSs who were enrolled in the U.S. IEPs. Collecting data through the follow-up semi-structured interviews gave sufficient feedback on these challenges that helped answering this research question. The researcher raised a general question regarding the participants’ experience and any kind of social challenges they faced with the American culture and society on campus and off campus during their time in the IEPs. All the 10 interviewees indicated that they were struggling with social adjustment that hindered their EP academically and socially. The factors effecting social adjustment were social involvement, involvement on campus, relocation, satisfaction with education, institute and faculty reputation, social support, ethnic origin and identity, social life, and financial aid. Since these factors were remarkably interconnected and interchangeable with each other, the researcher decided to discuss them in one section.

Eight interviewees expressed their satisfaction with the social activities the IEPs were offering and explained how they were involved with these social activities on/off campus that made social adjustment easier for them (Table 26).

Table 26

Interviewees' Quotations of Satisfaction with IEPs' Social Activities

Name	Country	IEP	Quotation
Mohammad 1	Iraq	PSU	"There were some social activities that the language institute and the international student's office did ..." "The activities the school was doing helped me socialize a little bit."
Mohammad 2	Iraq	CCS	"The language institute had social activities for international students. The number of activities were enough to some extent. I used to participate in these activities."
Mohammad 4	Iraq	KU & WMU	"There were many activities, picnics, historic places, communities."
Mohammad 5	Saudi Arabia	BPU	"There was a program in the IEP that is called 'u-body' where you tell them your interests and they match you up with group or activity as volunteers or friends or go out with them."
Mohammad 7	Saudi Arabia	UM	"Almost every two weeks, the IEP would do a trip to DC or New York. I participated in most of them."
Hameedah 1	Saudi Arabia	UCF	"There are some social activities and I participate in them."
Hameedah 2	Saudi Arabia	UCF	"Yes, a lot of activities and I used to participate in most of these activities."
Hameedah 3	Kuwait	SSC	"There were some activities but not many. I didn't participate with activities outside the language institute."

While, one interviewee, Mohammad 6, indicated that there were no enough social activities and the ones that his school was running were not helping him overcome social

adjustment difficulties; “There are very few social activities and the ones they do are not really helping with social adjustment.”

On one hand, seven interviewees expressed their unpleasant on/off campus experience with the American society because of the differences in cultural practices and costumes between the home country culture and the American culture (Table 27). For instance, Mohammad 7 stated that the different nature of the American life from one state into another made social adjustment harder for him;

When I was in Baltimore or Chicago, the community was more accepting to international students and other cultures, that’s why I was more active there. But, when I went to Brookings/ South Dakota, people there don’t really accept international students and understand them.

Table 27

Interviewees' Quotations of Cultural Differences

Name	Country	IEP	Quotation
Mohammad 2	Iraq	CCS	"Social life is very bad."
Mohammad 4	Iraq	KU & WMU	"...some social differences, ... Social connections in the US are limited, especially family connection, while in Iraq, family connections are strong. They don't go out a lot ... Time respect is more important in the US than in Iraq."
Mohammad 5	Saudi Arabia	BPU	"There was a cultural challenge in the language institute since we had males and females together in the same class and we are not familiar with that." "They [Americans] don't understand our culture" "What they do in their free time is different than what we do, and their concept of entertainment is different."
Mohammad 6	Saudi Arabia	UW	"Also, the idea of having fun is by going to bars or drinking alcohol." "To some extent, I don't feel comfortable talking and being a friend to Americans because I don't feel there are similarities." "There are so many Muslims and mosques here that help families adjust."
Mohammad 7	Saudi Arabia	UM	"I struggled with the costumes." "The differences in culture and costumes were the most difficult thing for me with my social life." "... the western culture may allow things that we as Arabs and Muslims don't allow them."
Hameedah 1	Saudi Arabia	UCF	"I was staying with families and they were interfering with my personal freedom." "I don't think that Americans understand my culture" "I noticed that they don't have a good family relation (not connected)."
Hameedah 3	Kuwait	SSC	"I didn't participate in the social activities on/out of campus."

Mohammad 5 was the only interviewee who stated that he was having unpleasant experience with the American society because of his ethnicity that effected his personal-emotional adjustment. Mohammad 5 said, “On the personal-emotional adjustment difficulties level, I struggled with racism like the way people look at me all the time, but I don’t care.”, which might be the reason why he was spending his free time at home learning English from TV shows instead of going out and having American friends as he stated “The time, I spent at home, helped me learn English better than going out with American ..., like talk shows.”

On the other hand, seven interviewees implied that they were satisfied with some of the experiences they had with Americans. Americans realization of the cultural differences between the American and the Arab cultures or the fact that Americans have a welcoming nature might be the reason behind the good experience of AGSs in the U.S. A good example of the Americans greeting nature was stated by Hameedah 1 who said that “... they [Americans] are sweet and gentle with other people. They start greetings when they see someone without waiting for the other to start.” However, this satisfaction didn’t come from the understanding of the Arab culture, it rather came from the friendly nature of Americans (Table 28).

Table 28

Interviewees' Quotations of Culture Understanding

Name	Country	IEP	Quotation
Mohammad 1	Iraq	PSU	<p>"One day we had an interview with retired people, and we socialized with them and I felt comfortable talking to them."</p> <p>"The American society accepts others which helped us adjust easily through their friendless."</p>
Mohammad 2	Iraq	CCS	"They [Americans] help when someone needs something."
Mohammad 4	Iraq	KU & WMU	"Even if they don't understand our culture, they don't show it and they thrive to know more about our culture."
Mohammad 6	Saudi Arabia	UW	"People here are so welcoming even if they don't understand my culture."
Hameedah 1	Saudi Arabia	UCF	"They show support for people and care for people's feelings and care about the psychological side."
Hameedah 2	Saudi Arabia	UCF	"... they [Americans] respect us very much and not as I was expecting. Some people told me that I might have problems because I am wearing a scarf."
Hameedah 3	Kuwait	SSC	"They [Americans] don't interfere with people's private life."

Couple of interviewees indicated that they preferred to socialize with people from the same background culture, mainly from Arab countries, regardless of the friendliness of the American society. Mohammad 1 stated that "Most of my socializing was with Iraqis ..." although earlier, he indicated that the American society was welcoming and friendly to him and his family. Another example was Mohammad 4 who indicated how the shared cultural background helped him with social adjustment;

In Kansas, there were so many Iraqis and Arabs who helped us [his family and him]. In Michigan, it was the same... because I am surrounded by Iraqis and Arabs who share the same culture and they understand my culture.

These social preferences came from the AGSs' realization of the social differences between the two cultures and the strong social bond they had with their peers who shared the same Arab culture.

Another example of the effect of the cultural differences on social adjustment was the notion of friendship and the diverse understanding of this concept between cultures, mainly American and Arab cultures (Table 29). The friendship misinterpretation was a very significant aspect in social adjustment that was mentioned by almost all the 10 interviewees. This aspect was highlighted by Mohammad 2 when he talked about the differences in the understanding of the concept of friendship between the two cultures.

It is unfriendly society. I have the same group of friends and I don't get to know new friends. Their friends [American] are only from high school. Even when you go out with them [American] and consider them [American] friends you discover they don't consider you a friend. While in Iraq I can get a friend so easily. This is maybe because they know a little about the other cultures or other countries. They tend to study, and their parents and the school system raise them to know only about the US.

Table 29

Interviewees' Quotations of Friendship Differences

Name	Country	IEP	Quotation
Mohammad 1	Iraq	PSU	"I don't have many American friends."
Mohammad 2	Iraq	CCS	"I don't have real American friends, maybe one only." "I had a married Mexican friend ... We were friends because her culture was similar to mine and she wasn't American."
Mohammad 4	Iraq	KU & WMU	"I know some American, but they are not friends, they are colleagues." "... I don't go out with Americans."
Mohammad 5	Saudi Arabia	BPU	"I don't have many American friends, but I have colleagues at the university because of their free time." "It is difficult to have friendship with Americans."
Mohammad 6	Saudi Arabia	UW	"I have few American friends here because of the nature of their life. Also, the idea of having fun is by going to bars or drinking alcohol."
Mohammad 7	Saudi Arabia	UM	"...very few American friends"
Hameedah 1	Saudi Arabia	UCF	"I don't have many American friends."
Hameedah 2	Saudi Arabia	UCF	"I had many American colleagues in the school where I did my training."

Hameedah 3 was the only participant who stated that "We [Hameedah 3 and her two daughters] have many American friends who are neighbors. We don't go together in picnics, but I visit them at their homes." Hameedah 3 might not have a clear differentiation between the concepts of friendship and the concept of neighborhood because when the researcher asked her if she thinks that Americans understood her culture, she didn't indicate that they do understand her culture because of her experience

with her neighbors, instead she replied, “they understand our culture because of the news.” This situation gave this study an insight on how the cultural differences effected the misinterpretation of the concept of friendship.

Another fundamental reason for AGSs’ struggle with social adjustment was relocation/ homesickness. All the Arabian Gulf interviewees answered the question ‘whether they felt homesickness during their studies in the IEP’ with ‘definitely’. They even stated that homesickness was a crucial reason for being less involved with the American society and contented with their social life in the U.S. and some of them even decided to head back to their home countries. Some of the interviewees indicated that this feeling of homesickness was mainly in the first few months, while others said that it lasted for a year at least (Table 30).

Table 30

Interviewees' Quotations of Relocation/ Homesickness

Name	Country	IEP	Quotation
Mohammad 1	Iraq	PSU	"Definitely. I missed my family a lot especially when I was in the language institute ... I even decided to go back and leave the IEP"
Mohammad 2	Iraq	CCS	"I definitely felt homesickness in the first year, ..., because my parents, brother, and friends were not with me."
Mohammad 4	Iraq	KU & WMU	"Definitely. I miss my family all the time because of the routine in America and because I was missing my family and the Iraqi atmosphere."
Mohammad 5	Saudi Arabia	BPU	"Definitely, yes, because I came to the US in 2017 and I didn't have the time to go back and see my family in Christmas ..."
Mohammad 6	Saudi Arabia	UW	"Yes, I missed my family."
Mohammad 7	Saudi Arabia	UM	"definitely, when I couldn't go to visit my family ... and I missed the costumes and family traditions."
Hameedah 1	Saudi Arabia	UCF	"Yes, definitely. I always miss my family"
Hameedah 2	Saudi Arabia	UCF	"Yes, definitely, I missed my family... especially, when we arrived at the US and they told us that we couldn't leave the US for a year"
Hameedah 3	Kuwait	SSC	"Yes, definitely, after 6 months."

4.3.2.3 Research Question 3 and Research Question 4

The third qualitative research question was "What personal-emotional challenges are expressed by Arabian Gulf students enrolled in U.S. Intensive English Programs (IEP)?" All the 10 interviewees indicated that they were having personal issues as well as emotional struggles with adjusting to the life in the U.S. that effected their EP in the American IEPs. Some of these difficulties and complications were the results of the psychological and physical conditions that AGSs were struggling with.

4.3.2.3.1 Psychological Well-Being

One of the crucial reasons for the AGSs' psychological struggle was that being far from their families and friends; as illustrated in Table 30. Nine of the interviewees stated that they were struggling emotionally and having hard time coping with the fact of being far away from their families and culture. Some reasons that had indirect effect on AGSs psychological health were reviewed in the previous sections of the discussion of question one and question two, such as language barrier, cultural differences, friendship, etc. Other reasons were their unawareness of the existence of counselling centers for enrolled students at the universities or IEPs. In addition, some interviewees indicated that they were informed about these centers, but they chose not to go because of the cultural embarrassment (Table 31). Mohammad 1 clarified that his Arab friends and he did not go to these centers because "The school has counselling for students, but we didn't know about it and even after we knew we felt embarrassed to go there."

Table 31

Interviewees' Quotations of Psychological Well-Being

Name	Country	IEP	Quotation
Mohammad 1	Iraq	PSU	"language was the big problem and made me stressed and there were no enough signs and motivations." "... when I am in the classroom, I feel stressed"
Mohammad 2	Iraq	CCS	"...I feel like I am in prison"
Mohammad 4	Iraq	KU & WMU	"Academic consulting is available, but I don't know about psychological consulting." "... I failed it [test] which very affected me."
Mohammad 5	Saudi Arabia	BPU	"They [school] have social and academic consulting at the language institute. I went to them to help me to be admitted to this university." "... racism through the way they look at me, but I developed an immune system after a while."
Mohammad 6	Saudi Arabia	UW	"I didn't hear about psychological consulting ... We had some academic offices, but they were not very professional employees."
Mohammad 7	Saudi Arabia	UM	"I was stressed but I studied hard and I passed the test."
Hameedah 1	Saudi Arabia	UCF	"[avoiding him by Americans] that was painful to me." "The first day of school, I told them that I am depressed, and I need psychological help..."
Hameedah 2	Saudi Arabia	UCF	"... because being here by myself and taking responsibility for things was hard especially without a male companion with me." "...I was in a total shock"

4.3.2.3.2 Physical Well-Being

Good physical health and constant physical exercises have a great impact on students' mental and physical health that leads to a better personal adjustment and academic performance (Keating et al., 2010). Self-image and physical shape are two major factors effecting physical well-being that have an influence on academic

performance. One interviewee, Mohammad 7, justified how sports were important for him “I play sports, like soccer and basketball, mostly with Arabs but there are some Americans I play sports with.” because “it helps us improve our personality and change some of our costumes that need to be changed, like women driving cars...” The positive impact of playing sports improved Mohammad 7’s emotional adjustment which was obvious throughout the interview, especially when he said, “I feel that I have changed into a better person.”

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this mixed-method study was to explore academic, cultural, and personal-emotional adjustment challenges Arabian Gulf students (AGSs) faced in U.S. intensive English programs (IEPs) and the effect of these challenges on AGSs' English performance (EP). This research investigated student perspectives and experiences about studying in the U.S. IEPs. A questionnaire documented the experiences of these students' challenges to provides further depth. Interviewees' shared insights and experiences served as examples for the natures of academic, social, and personal emotional challenges AGSs faced during their time in the U.S. IEPs. Chapter Five represented a discussion and concluding thoughts of the proposed research findings, discussions, and implications for AGSs, U.S. IEPs, faculty and administrators, their sponsors, and recommendations for future research.

5.1 Analysis of Results of Quantitative Questions

5.1.1 Research Question 1

The first quantitative research question examined if there was a correlation between the dependent variable, AGSs' TOEFL score, and independent variable, academic adjustment and the nature of the relationship. Once the SACQ data were collected, they were first analyzed using Pearson correlation to examine the correlation between academic adjustment and TOEFL score. The results of Pearson correlation showed a statistically significance correlation ($r=.755$, $p=.000$) between academic

adjustment and TOEFL score. This meant that academic adjustment correlated strongly with TOEFL score, EP, of AGSs. Yet, Person correlation coefficient is not capable of identifying the direction of this correlation. Therefore, the researcher ran regression to furthermore explore the correlation established between the dependent and independent variables. Regression results were statistically significant, 65.7%, revealing a positive strong correlation between TOEFL score and academic adjustment. Hence, the analysis indicated that the better academic adjustment AGSs achieve, the better TOEFL score they would get.

The quantitative results showed that when AGSs had academic adjustment challenges, their EP was impacted negatively and their TOEFL scores went down referring to the strong relationship between these challenges and their academic performance. The quantitative results aligned with the qualitative results that AGSs' academic adjustment difficulties effected their EP, TOEFL scores, in U.S. IEPs. The 10 interviewees, in the qualitative data, indicated that they were having academic adjustment challenges which had a negative impact on their EP due to various academic factors. These results supported *student departure theory* by Tinto (1975) and Renties et al. (2011, 2012a), as well as previous studies done on other international students.

5.1.2 Research Question 2

The second research question focused on whether there was a correlation between the dependent variable, AGSs' TOEFL score, and independent variables, social adjustment, and the nature of the relationship between them as measure by Pearson and

regression correlations. The existing research on the impact of social adjustment on international students' academic performance, EP/ TOEFL score in this study, suggested that students who struggled with social adjustment tended to have a lower academic performance compared to those who performed better on social adjustment challenges. According to Tinto's *student departure theory* (1975), students with better social adjustment tend to have a higher academic performance than those who had social adjustment challenges. The quantitative data analysis for this study supported Tinto's theory (1975) by showing that participants in this study did have social adjustment challenges which effected their EP negatively.

Students' social adjustment had been found positively, strongly and significantly correlated with AGSs' EP. Pearson results showed a strong correlation between AGSs' TOEFL scores and social adjustment ($r = .790, p = .000$). This correlation between AGSs' TOEFL score and social adjustment was found to be the strongest correlation between the three types of adjustment and TOEFL score. Furthermore, regression results, 65.7%, revealed a positive correlation between TOEFL score and social adjustment.

These results were supported by the qualitative results that AGSs' social adjustment challenges had a negative effect on their TOEFL scores. Yet, there were individual differences in the social adjustment experiences that were communicated by the AGSs interviewees in the qualitative semi-structured interviews, which indicated that there had been various direct and indirect social factors effecting social adjustment.

5.1.3 Research Question 3

The third quantitative research question focused on the correlation and the nature of the relationship between AGSs' TOEFL score as the dependent variable and personal-emotional adjustment as the independent variable measure by SACQ. Previous quantitative research into the correlation had been conducted but not on AGSs, so the researcher decided to measure the correlation strength between these variables. Pearson results, ($r=.755$, $p=.000$), showed a strong correlation between AGSs' EP measured by their TOEFL scores, and personal-emotional adjustment, measured by SACQ. These results supported by the qualitative results, where AGSs interviewees indicated that they were having personal-emotional adjustment challenges which had a negative impact on their EP. All the 10 interviewees indicated that they were going through emotional challenges, like making friends and blending in, but not physical difficulties that hindered their EP. Yet, the quantitative results didn't tell us which one of these adjustment difficulties, personal or emotional, had that strong correlation with TOEFL score.

Then, the researcher examined the nature of the relationship between dependent and independent variables. Regression was run and the result reflected a positive strong correlation, 65.7%, between TOEFL score and personal-emotional adjustment. These results supported Tinto's theory (1975) and Renties et al. (2011, 2012a) that personal-emotional adjustment had a positive correlation with academic performance, in this case, it was EP/ TOEFL score. Yet, there were individual differences that were covered in the qualitative data collection and result analysis, for instance physical adjustment challenges that none of the 10 interviewees indicated.

5.2 Analysis of Results of Qualitative Questions

5.2.1 Research Questions 1 and 4

The first and fourth qualitative questions of this mixed-method study focused on the academic adjustment challenges and their impact on AGSs' EP in the U.S. IEPs. Based on previous studies conducted by a number of researchers (Al-Nusair, 2000; Hofer, 2009; Li et al., 2010; Mahrous & Ahmed, 2010; McDermott-Levy, 2011; McLachlan and Justice, 2009; Shaw, 2009; Trice, 2004; Wang, 2004), AGSs had faced many academic adjustment difficulties that effected their academic performance in the undergraduate and graduate programs in the U.S. Yet, it was unknown how these academic challenges effected AGSs' EP in the U.S. IEPs. The results of the current study showed that all the 10 interviewees encountered academic adjustment struggles with motivation, academic environment, academic efficiency, and academic effort that effected their EP.

Hofer (2009) investigated the motivation concerns of Saudi students studying in the undergraduate and graduate programs in State of Missouri. The findings of her study showed that adjustment experiences of those students were less challenging and problematic than the struggles experienced by Saudis in previous studies. Though the students, in Hofer's study (2009), described minor problems, yet the qualitative method implied a spirit of optimism within the students' reflection on the interview's questions. Correspondingly, Shaw's study (2009) on Saudi students in the State of Oregon revealed similar findings to Hofer's (2009). One substantial reason for Saudi students' academic success was the impression of being part of the campus community. The findings of the

current study showed that AGSs students in the U.S. IEPs, including Saudi students, were still having significant academic difficulties and that one of the most crucial challenges for AGSs was English language difficulties that prevented them from getting involved with campus community. All the 10 Arabian Gulf participants in the current study indicated that the absence of language competence and fluency were the reasons behind the lack of the academic motivation that led to a lower EP. Another factor that Hofer (2009) mentioned in the findings of her study was that students' willingness for more activities since they might ease their academic adjustment and motivate them for a better EP. Six of the interviewees in the current study stated that they were anticipating more activities to motivate them achieve better on the academic level. While, two of the interviewees stated that they were pleased with the activities offered in the IEPs they were attending.

The academic environment was another significant challenge for AGSs in their adjustment to the U.S. IEPs. Arab students, including AGSs, had faced difficulties with their academic adjustment because of their limited knowledge about the instructional practices of the American educational institutions that differ from those in their home countries (Mahrous & Ahmed, 2010).

McDermott-Levy conducted a study in 2011 where she interviewed 12 Omani female undergraduate students in a nursing school in the United States. The 12 participants revealed that English language difficulties, such as understanding American accents, understanding lectures, and coping with the American teaching styles were the major reasons for their academic struggles. Correspondingly, all the 10 interviewees, in

the current study, indicated that differences in teaching styles, teaching methodology, and understanding the American teaching styles were crucial reasons for their academic struggles. Mohammad 2, indicated how the accent of the American teachers in the IEP, and his limited vocabulary knowledge delayed his academic adjustment and eventually impeded his EP.

In addition, all the 10 interviewees in the current study added other factors that made the academic adjustment in the U.S. IEPs harder for them; such as, examination procedures, classroom norms, memorization vs. constructivism, their limited knowledge of adopting basic learning skills, and participating in classroom activities were major reasons for their academic struggles in the U.S. IEPs. These findings corresponded with Abukhattala's (2013) study when he investigated the educational experience of ten undergraduate Arab students in two different universities in Montreal, Canada. The findings of his study indicated that the differences in teaching methodology, foreign language teaching and learning, and examination between these students' home countries and the host country were the leading reasons for their positive and negative academic experiences.

Academic efficiency was another factor that had positive and negative impact on AGSs' academic adjustment. Li et al. (2010) stated that English proficiency was the major indicator of academic adjustment and academic success. Trice (2004) conducted a study where he surveyed 497 international graduate students, in a Midwestern American university, to define their adjustment difficulties at that university. The results showed that the students' limited English proficiency affected students' ability to effectively

communicate and participate in classes. Likewise, McLachlan and Justice (2009) highlighted that the failure to effectively collaborate and participate in the academic situations had a negative impact on international students' academic success. All the 10 interviewees in the current study stated that they were struggling with the use of English to communicate with others in different academic and social situations because of the insufficient English competence. The struggle with the use of English was clearly stated by the 10 participants who were feeling uncomfortable to use English in the academic setting. This problem led to less involvement with classmates and teachers, limited oral participation, incompetence of class reading, incapability of taking notes which eventually effected the students' EP.

International students, including AGSs, were expecting a high level of assistance, guidance, and understanding from their mentors, advisors, and faculty (Wang, 2004). In the current study, eight of the interviewees implied that the help and support they got from their teachers, advisors, and IEPs' administrators helped them overcome some of the academic difficulties they were facing in the American IEPs. Whereas, two interviewees stated that they didn't get the academic support they were expecting from their EL teachers, advisor, and the IEP administrators where they were enrolled. These two participants explained how the lack of guidance and support influenced their academic adjustment and impeded their EP in the U.S. IEPs.

AGSs might need to apply more academic effort to align successfully with the curriculum requirements of the American academic necessities. Al-Nusair (2000) conducted a study on Saudi college students' use of effort, time, and energy while

attending higher education institutions in the U.S. The findings of her study revealed that Saudi students were not completely satisfied with American higher education institutions that led to less involvement in writing, social and interpersonal activities, and devotion of academic efforts. Correspondingly, the findings of the current study showed that all the 10 interviewees were less involved in writing, social and interpersonal activities, and not spending enough academic efforts because they were less satisfied with IEPs in the U.S. Some of the participants stated that they felt the IEP was a business establishment more than an academic institute. Other interviewees showed their contempt toward the type of English language context being taught in the IEP. On one hand, some participants explained that the English being taught in the IEP was completely in academic English contexts that they could not use in social language and situations out of classrooms. On the other hand, some indicated that the language being taught was more into social context and settings than academic language context, though they needed to learn academic language styles to carry on with their undergraduate and graduate studies.

5.2.2 Research Questions 2 and 4

The second and fourth qualitative questions of this mixed-method study focused on the social adjustment encounters and their impact on AGSs' EP in the U.S. IEPs. Collecting data through the follow-up semi-structured interviews gave sufficient feedback on the social challenges AGSs faced on campus and off campus that helped answering this research question. All the 10 interviewees indicated that they were struggling with social adjustment that, to some extent, hindered their EP academically

and socially. One of the interviewees indicated that the discrimination he felt in the IEP made him more persistent on learning English to prove himself to other people. Thus, AGSs' social adjustment experience was impacted by various crucial factors. These factors were social involvement, involvement on campus, relocation, satisfaction with education, institute and faculty reputation, social support, ethnic origin and identity, social life, and financial aid.

Zepke and Leach (2005) conducted a study of literature on 146 research studies to understand how higher education institutes can improve students' outcomes. The findings revealed that there were two types of institutional behaviors. The first one tried to fit international students with the host country existing cultures. All of the 10 interviewees, in the current study, stated that they felt homesickness most of the time because they felt that they did not belong to the culture, whether on campus or off campus. The second type of institutional behaviors, in Zepke and Leach's (2005) study, worked on making the host country's culture suitable for the students' needs. Eight interviewees, in the current study, expressed their satisfaction with the social activities that were offered in the IEPs how they were involved with these social activities on/off campus which made social adjustment easier for them. While, one interviewee, Mohammad 6, indicated that the social activities offered in the IEP were limited and not helping with overcoming social adjustment difficulties.

Rising and Copp (1992) indicated that several studies examining international students' cultural adjustment from different countries showed that students from non-Western had experienced a hard time adjusting to their new academic and social

environment of the host country, and to the American culture in general. Mehdizadeh and Scott (2005) studied the social, cultural, and psychological adjustment difficulties of Iranian students who had been enrolled in Scottish higher education institutes for six months to five years. The findings showed that international students who shared a closer culture to that of their host society were more accepting, adopting, and adjusting than students who had a considerably different background culture. In the current study, seven interviewees revealed that their unpleasant experience with the American society was because of the variances in cultural practices and costumes between their home countries' cultures and the American culture. One interviewee, Mohammad 5, stated that his unpleasant experience with the American society, because of his ethnicity, effected his personal-emotional adjustment and led to a lower EP. Yet, those seven interviewees implied that they were having some good experiences with some Americans because of their realization of the cultural differences between the American and the Arab cultures or the fact that Americans have a welcoming nature.

Alreshoud and Koeske (1997) conducted a study of 74 Saudi male students enrolled in higher education institutes in the U.S. to explain the relationship between cultural attitudes and social interaction of Saudis and Americans. The findings showed that Saudi students were not so interested in participating in activities with Americans because of the cultural differences, the insufficient contact environment, and Saudi students' preference of staying with the same nationality group of students (Lippman, 2004). Couple of interviewees, in the current study, indicated that they were mostly

socializing with people from the same background culture, Arab countries, regardless of the friendliness of the American society.

The impact of cultural differences on social adjustment could also be explained through the awareness of friendship concept and the diverse cultural interpretation of this concept, for instance, American and Arab cultures. The misinterpretation of friendship concept had a significant impact on AGSs' social adjustment. Almost all the 10 interviewees, in this study, emphasized that it was hard to develop friendship relations with Americans and what they thought was American friends turned out to be colleagues of academic environment. Mohammad 4, one of the interviews in the current study, talked about the differences in the interpretation of the concept of friendship between his culture and the American culture; "I know some American, but they are not friends, they are colleagues." During the interviews, the participants implied that having American friends would help them practice English with native speakers and that would positively impact their EP in the IEPs, as Mohammad 1 mentioned "... we [students] didn't have conversations with native speakers on the academic level."

5.2.3 Research Questions 3 and 4

The third and fourth qualitative questions of this mixed-method study focused on the social adjustment encounters and their impact on AGSs' EP in the U.S. IEPs. All the 10 interviewees implied that there were some personal struggles as well as emotional disturbances with adjustment to the life in the U.S. that influenced their EP in the

American IEPs. Some of these struggles and stressors were the results of the psychological and physical states AGSs were going through.

McLachlan and Justice (2009) stated that 95% of international students experience certain level of homesickness and loneliness, especially in the early stage of their arrival. Similarly, Li et al. (2010) indicated that international students experience vast amounts of stress while living and studying in foreign environment that differs from their home countries' cultural settings. Shibazaki (1999) stated that family support is crucial for lower levels of stress and anxiety and for higher levels of mental and physical health that impact international students' adjustment to college life (Rienties et al., 2011). Home sickness and being far from families and friends were two fundamental reasons for the AGSs' psychological struggles, in the current study, that hindered them from having high EP. Nine of the interviewees affirmed that they were having unpleasant experience and emotionally stressed for being far from their families and home country culture.

In addition, English language barrier was another reason that generated stress challenges for AGSs and effected their EP. Azari, Dandeker, and Greenberg (2010) and Hu (2008) explained how the differences of English instruction in the students' home country compared to English instruction in the United States triggered anxiety situations for international students. In the current study, all the 10 interviewees explained how their limited knowledge and the differences in the educational practices between their home country and the IEPs in the U.S. had a negative impact on their EP (Chapter Four, 4.3.2.1.1. Motivation). Furthermore, McLachlan and Justice's (2009) study showed that international students were frustrated because they were not having effective

communication with their teachers and classmates. The consequences of language challenges were anxiety, depression, and self-doubt. Some of the 10 interviewees, in this study, indicated that they were not able to communicate with their advisors and teachers, while other interviewees stated that they were not participating in class activities because of the lack of language proficiency and the ability to communicate (Chapter Four, 4.3.2.1.3 Students' Efficiency).

Several studies revealed that the majority of international students, such as AGSs, would not search and ask for mental health treatment, others indicated the need for mental treatment for international students because of stress-related issues (McLachlan & Justice, 2009). Some interviewees, in the current study, implied that they were informed about the psychological consulting centers, but they preferred not to go because of the cultural embarrassment. Mohammad 1 stated that the reason he did not go to these centers because "... we [his friends and he] felt embarrassed to go there."

Another influential factor that had a significant impact on AGSs' EP was their physical health. According to Keating et al. (2010), students with good physical health and constant physical exercises had a better mental health that resulted in a better personal adjustment to higher education. In the current study, one interviewee only, Mohammad 7, indicated that sports were important for his personal adjustment in the U.S. because "it helps us improve our personality and change some of our costumes that need to be changed, like women driving cars..." The constructive impact of playing sports elevated Mohammad 7's physical and emotional perspectives; "I feel that I have changed into a better person."

5.3 Impact of the Study

Studies examining AGSs in the United States are rare. This study provides a better understanding of how academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustment challenges may impact AGSs' EP in U.S. IEPs. It was shown how these challenges shared by AGSs lowered their TOEFL score and had negative impact on overall adjustment experience in the U.S. This mixed-method research not only contributes to existing research in the field of English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL), it also suggests new research potentials.

With the increasing number of AGSs and Arab students studying in U.S. institutes, it is important to study their adjustment challenges and how this group of students can be better supported during their alteration. Based on current literature and future recommendation of previous studies, there is a need to focus on AGSs' adjustment experiences and English performance in a broader method and context.

Most existing research has explored the adjustment issues of international students as a group, investigating problems such as social support (Poyrazli et al., 2004; Sumer et al., 2008), English language performance (Poyrazli et al., 2004; Yen & Inose, 2003), and perceived discrimination (Araujo, 2011; Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007). The current study is exploring wide range of adjustment difficulties faced by AGSs in the U.S. IEPs. Previous studies (Heyn, 2013; Rundles, 2012) collected data from specific U.S. higher education institutions or examined graduate and undergraduate students, whereas this study considered students in IEPs all over the U.S. In addition, most of the studies on Arab students were done on Saudi Arabian students or Emirati students (Hofer,

2009; Shaw, 2009), while this study surveyed AGSs from Arabian Gulf Countries including Saudi students and Emirati students. Many previous studies (Alanazy, 2013; Alhajjaj, 2016; Alhazmi, 2010; Hakami, 2012; Heyn, 2013; Hofer, 2009; Kampman, 2011; Mahrous & Ahmed, 2010) incorporated either qualitative or quantitative methodology, whereas this study is a mixed-method research that interviewed students for the qualitative data and surveyed students for the quantitative data.

5.4 Strengths of the Study

This study had many strengths which contributed to the field of ESL/ EFL. First, the rich mixed-method data from this study through the quantitative questionnaire and the qualitative interviews provided a detailed comprehensive insight into the adjustment experience of AGSs studying in the U.S. IEPs. The pilot study provided feedback and helped shape the final version of questionnaire. The final modified questionnaire was a combination of two separate questionnaires created by different researchers that enabled the study to test a wide spectrum of adjustment challenges and examine more aspects and criteria that were not tested with this population of international students. The findings of the quantitative data were substantial in supporting the conceptual background of this study and supporting the findings of the qualitative data. when collecting the qualitative data, the interviews were in Arabic language and lasted between 20 minutes to one hour and a half, it gave participants the chance to feel comfortable and be open in their responses in a risk-free communicative environment. Students were very expressive about the challenges and adjustments difficulties they faced in the U.S. institutes and the

impact of these challenges on their EP/ TOEFL scores. These results will contribute to the limited existing literature and empirical data on AGSs studying in the U.S.

Second, this study examined AGSs' adjustment in different institutes from different states in the U.S. The questionnaire was distributed online in order to reach more participants from different AGCs' nationalities in several IEPs in the U.S. The wide range of participants' geographical locations in the U.S. provided more awareness of the various aspects of challenges AGSs experienced when adjusting to U.S. higher education and culture.

Another strength, based on the literature reviewed, was this study addressed AGSs only rather than other international students. The research focused particularly on AGS' academic, social, and personal-emotional challenges and their impact on the students' EP. Other research done in this field of study examined international students as one group or very specific population from the Arabian Gulf area.

5.5 Weaknesses of the Study

Although the researcher paid attention to details with respect to instrumentation design, application, data collection, and data analysis, yet there were some uncalculated oversights that were unavoidable. This study had weaknesses in reference to design and implementation instrumentation. Although the online distribution of the questionnaire was recognized as a strength, it may also be reflected upon as a weakness because it affected quality and quantity of participation. Collecting data online had its risks. On one hand, participants did not have interaction with the researcher to ask questions about

questionnaire items. On the other hand, the researcher would not be able to answer the participants' questions and get them to finish the entire questionnaire. The inability to communicate with participants resulted in 40 uncompleted online copies that could benefit the research if they were completed.

Another weakness was the amount of time required to distribute, fill out, and collect data from participants took a semester to finish data collection. In addition to the online access, if the researcher had face-to-face interaction with participants by gaining access to classrooms during the normal school day, she would be able to collect more data in less time. Furthermore, the researcher would be able to answer the participants' questions and might be able to acquire more complete copies.

A final weakness to consider for the current study related to how much the participants were actually accurate about their answers, especially in self-reporting of TOEFL score. Participants might hesitate to answer all the questionnaire items truthfully because of the fallacious notion that implied 'reporting negative experience might impact their status as international students attending IEPs in the U.S.'

5.6 Limitations

This study surveyed 160 AGSs studying English in several IEPs in the U.S. for the spring semester of 2019. One of the limitations of this study was the sampling size that examined 160 AGSs studying in U.S. IEPs. Using a larger sample size may provide more information regarding AGSs and help to learn more about other issues that challenge them. Also, the imbalance of gender demographic distribution was a limitation

to this study as having more female participants from variety of AGCs could have impacted the results.

Another limitation was related to the dependent variable of the research which was academic performance that was measured by students' TOEFL score. Academic performance was computed as a one-scale variable due to the fact that international students in U.S. IEPs do not have GPAs as undergraduate and graduate students do. Thus, the only method to measure their English performance was TOEFL score instead of GPA. Combining two or more scale could make the measurement process more accurate for students' academic performance. Additional limitation related to EP was using students' self-reported TOEFL scores for English performance in this study. This might result in not precise data and if it would be possible for future researchers it is recommended to use students' academic profiles available in their schools.

This study used SACQ and SIQ to collect the quantitative data for the adjustment challenges. The SACQ and SIQ questionnaire was designed to measure academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustments of AGSs in the U.S. IEPs. The use of a different type of questionnaire may add more information to the literature and reveal new findings that need to be studied in future.

5.7 Implications

As it had been discussed in this research, students' academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustments were fundamental controllers of AGSs' EP in U.S. IEPs. The results of the current study can be used by ESL/EFL teachers and administrators to

validate and improve teaching practices. Researchers can also use this study to design future research that may help ESL/EFL practitioners apprehend the role of adjustment challenges on international students' academic performance in general, and on TOEFL score in particular.

5.7.1. ESL/EFL Instructors

ESL/EFL instructors should pay more attention to the academic needs of AGSs with the aim the aim of improving their academic practices and prepare them for undergraduate and graduate studies. They, also, need to consider the social adjustment challenges AGSs endure while attending schools in the U.S. Another vital adjustment challenge is the personal-emotional difficulty that is represented in the students' physical and psychological health. This study helps IEPs' instructors understand these challenges so they can motivate their students to study more, provide optimistic atmosphere making them feel confident to achieve their goals, and support them academically and socially on a personal level. Rewards can be a used to motivate AGSs be more effective academically and socially involved on-and-off campus. Reward can be used in any age category; therefore, it is suggested that administrators and teachers regard implement them within the classroom daily practices and honor students for achieving high quality academic performance.

Critical thinking is one of the reasons that AGSs face difficulties in writing and reading comprehension in the IEPs in the U.S. ESL/EFL instructors need to be aware that the differences in the learning styles and educational practices between the AGCs and the U.S. are major reasons for AGSs' academic struggles that impact the students' English performance. Textbooks need to be endorsed with critical thinking pedagogy gradually

and wisely to avoid any misunderstanding AGSs may have since they have practiced different cultural patterns in schooling. Better levels of comprehension, interpretation, and analysis may be gained by AGSs if critical thinking is being taught progressively. Critical analysis of a script can be skilled through instructional patterns that will help learners, especially EL learners, to learn and acquire (Street, 1984, 1993). ESL/EFL instructors can use the same instructional patterns with the new students who can watch and learn from their classmates for a while until they acquire the knowledge of how to do it without support.

ESL/EFL instructors can be provided with more intervention/ training programs to be culturally competent of the educational and social differences and cultural sensitivity of topics related to AGSs when attending IEPs in the U.S. Instructors need to be familiar with their AGSs' cultural and religious practices and celebrations so students feel welcomed and appreciated by their teachers. These training programs can provide a positive social and academic environment that accelerates cross-cultural skills and help AGSs improve their English performance and TOEFL scores.

5.7.2. IEPs' Administrations

The implications of this dissertation incorporated considerations from previous literature and the results of the current study. U.S. higher education institutions, especially IEPs, promote diversity in international students' enrollment within their campuses. In order to provide constructive support and appropriate resources, it is important that faculty and administrators know their students' cultural and educational

backgrounds which they are coming from. Academic and writing support centers could join forces with the IEPs, if applicable, to collaborate on best academic practices for international students in an educational setting.

Banks (2004) presented the multiculturalism inclusion theory, which justified the need for including multiculturalism within the programs, curricula, policies, and practices of educational institutions to help multicultural students attain better academic performance and facilitate cultural adjustment in a foreign society. Multiculturalism inclusion helps not only international multicultural students, but it also raises domestic students' awareness of multicultural students' background cultures.

Another vital factor in helping AGSs having a better adjustment to the IEPs in the U.S. is the pre-entry orientation sessions. IEPs' administrators need to maintain these sessions and make them more practical and beneficiary for international students. They can do a one-week orientation sessions where each day focuses on one section of educational, social, and cultural differences and provide students with resources, like academic and psychological centers, to help them get the support they need during their study time in the U.S. Most of the U.S. universities and schools have counselling centers, for example, academic, psychological, and health/ physical centers that can be promoted during the orientation sessions in order to provide AGSs with the resources they need to have a healthier adjustment experience and a better academic performance.

Administrators and faculty should be provided with more training and workshops on cultural sensitivity, practices, and differences to better prepare them for working with different international populations with various background on campus. Academic

advisors, mentors, and coaches should also be included in these workshops and trainings as they play a major role for students coming from different educational and cultural backgrounds as they proceed through their coursework. Higher education institutions, especially IEPs, in the U.S. could also partner with the local communities and families in efforts to ease international students' adjustment transition and build positive and encouraging relationships with community members.

5.7.3. Future Research

In regard to future research direction and theory, the current study used Tinto's *Students' Departure Theory* (1975) to lead the theoretical background of the study. The focus was to study the impact of the academic, social, and personal emotional adjustment challenges on AGSs attending IEPs in the U.S. Future empirical research may replicate this study to address different stressors that were highlighted by different researchers. In addition, empirical investigations may adapt a different theory to examine the effect of these factors and other factors on the same population, AGSs. Furthermore, future empirical research may replicate the same theoretical framework to study the impact of the academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustment challenges on female AGSs in the IEPs in the U.S. or even use it to conduct a gender-based comparison study.

Future studies may consider broaden the sample size to include a control group, like Arab students or international students from other nationalities. A larger sample size of participants may also provide more information to the area of study. This study examined 160 AGSs attending IEPs in the U.S., future studies can examine more students



from AGCs or Arab countries and do comparative studies on their adjustments' struggles and triggers. Researchers can have more in-depth interviews with more participants, especially female participants, in order to examine more adjustment challenges that face AGSs, Arab students, and international students. Furthermore, it would be valuable for future research to conduct multiple interviews with each participant over an extended period of time as new and unarticulated adjustment challenges may emerge and develop through time. In addition, conducting longitudinal case study of AGS attending IEPs in the U.S. preparing for their undergraduate or graduate program in a U.S. higher education institute will be valuable for future research.

Regarding the SACQ and SIQ questionnaires that were used for this study, another questionnaire can be used to measure AGSs' academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustment. The SACQ was used to measure all the three adjustment challenges, while the SIQ was used to measure the social adjustment only, new questionnaires created by other researchers can be used to measure these adjustment challenges. Another future use of the SACQ and SIQ can include other revised questions that were deleted from the original questionnaire that was used for this study. Furthermore, the English version of the SACQ and SIQ can be used to survey AGSs instead of the Arabic translated version, especially if the participants are students in advanced levels at IEPs, undergraduate or graduate students in the U.S.


5.8 Conclusion

AGSs face academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustment challenges among other different challenges that may hinder their EP in the U.S. IEPs. This study examined the nature of the relationship and the impact of these challenges on AGSs' TOEFL scores. The difference in educational practices and systems between the U.S. and the AGCs is one of these adjustment challenges that AGCs experience because of their home countries' educational system differences. Adjusting to new cultural practices is not an easy process for AGSs who come from a different cultural background. The cultural stress they tolerate is not only related to adjusting to the new culture, but to the different educational settings, classroom practices, values, relations with peers, friendship, social patterns, and language. Furthermore, personal-emotional adjustment is another challenge that AGSs have to encounter when attending IEPs in the U.S. These challenges are physical challenges as well as psychological ones that may lead to troubles, such as, depression, anxiety, anger, and low self-esteem that reflect on their EP in IEPs.


APPENDIX A: SIQ QUESTIONNAIRE


Draft



	Totally disagree			Totally agree		
68. I think that my acquaintances/friends have a good perception/image of the faculty.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
69. I think that the general public has a good perception/image of the faculty.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
70. I think that employers have a good perception/image of my study.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
71. In my study there is a good balance between theory and practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
72. My study is oriented on the actual developments in future professional practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
73. My study offers me a realistic view on my future professional practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
74. My study helps me to explore my strengths and weaknesses in the context of different professional practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
75. Due to my study I will be more attractive for the labour market.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
76. I would recommend the faculty to friends/acquaintances.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
77. My close friends encourage me to continue attending the faculty.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>						
78. My family encourages me to stay in the faculty.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
79. My family approves my attendance at this faculty.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
80. During breaks of a meeting I have easy contact with other students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
81. During breaks of a meeting it is difficult for me to get in touch with other students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
82. I feel inhibited when speaking English .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
83. During breaks of a meeting I usually speak to people in my mother tongue.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
84. During breaks of a meeting I usually speak to people in English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
85. The reason to go to UM was mainly PBL (Problem Based Learning) .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
86. PBL suits me as an educational system.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
87. Outside class I have regular social contacts with Dutch students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>						
88. Outside class I have regular social contacts with German students .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
89. Outside class I have regular social contacts with students who are neither Dutch nor German .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
90. I am satisfied with my social life outside class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
91. I am a member of a student association (e.g. SV Saurus , SV Tragos , SC Circumflex).				Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
92. I am an <i>active</i> member of a study association (e.g. EFM Academy , AIESEC , UNSA).				Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
93. I am living:	<input type="checkbox"/> Alone <input type="checkbox"/> With partner <input type="checkbox"/> With parents <input type="checkbox"/> In a student house with other students <input type="checkbox"/> Other, namely.....					
<hr/>						
Most of the European countries like the Netherlands, Belgium or Germany provide financial aid, e.g. in form of a loan to full-time students.						
	Totally disagree			Totally agree		
94. Financial aid is important for my continuation in college.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
95. It has been difficult to finance my college education without financial aid.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
96. This year my parents or family provided for about this percentage of my university expenses.				<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: inline-block;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: inline-block;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px; display: inline-block;"></div> %



Please Turn Over





Draft

97. I work as a (student) assistant in the faculty or university Yes ☐ No ☐
98. I work outside the university Yes ☐ No ☐
99. I work more than 8 hours per week. Yes ☐ No ☐
100. Number of children ☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ More
101. The mother tongue of my mother is (select several if applicable): ☐ Dutch ☐ German ☐ English ☐ French
☐ Chinese ☐ Polish ☐ Spanish
Other, namely.....
102. The mother tongue of my father is (select several if applicable): ☐ Dutch ☐ German ☐ English ☐ French
☐ Chinese ☐ Polish ☐ Spanish
Other, namely.....
103. My mother tongue is (select several if applicable): ☐ Dutch ☐ German ☐ English ☐ French
☐ Chinese ☐ Polish ☐ Spanish
Other, namely.....
104. Please indicate the nationalities/citizenships you possess (select several if applicable): ☐ Netherlands ☐ Germany ☐ Belgium ☐ Canada
☐ France ☐ Poland ☐ USA ☐ China
☐ Spain ☐ UK
Other, namely.....

Thank you for your cooperation

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APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Please **CIRCLE** the answer that best represents you

1. Are you an international Arabic student with F1 or J1 studying in the U.S.?
Yes
No
2. Are you studying in an English language institute in the U.S.?
Yes
No
3. Please indicate your nationality (citizenship).
4. What is your gender?
Male
Female
Other
5. Please select the age that you are at the time of this survey.
17 or younger
18-20
21-25
26-30
31-35
36 or more
6. What is your marital status?
Married
Single
Other
7. If you are married, does your wife and/or husband live with you in the United States?
Yes
No
8. Do you have kids?
Yes
No
9. Does your child or children live with you in the United States?
Yes
No

10. What is your current living condition?
On campus: With an Arabic roommate
On campus: With an international student roommate
On campus: With an American roommate
On campus: With family
Off campus: With an Arabic roommate
Off campus: With an international student roommate
Off campus: With an American roommate
Off campus: With family
11. How do you receive financial support?
From my scholarship
From my current institution
From my family
From my job
12. What is the highest level of education that you achieved?
High school
Undergraduate
Graduate
Post-doctoral
13. Have you ever taken the iBT TOEFL test in your country?
Yes
No
If 'Yes', what was the score that helped you to get the admission to the current institute in t

If you cannot remember, then choose the score range:
Less than 40
40-50
51-60
61-70
71-80
81-90
91-100
101-110
111-120
14. Have you ever taken the iBT TOEFL test in the U.S.?
Yes
No
If 'Yes', how many times?
What is your highest iBT TOEFL scores?

If you cannot remember, then choose the score range:

Less than 40

40-50

51-60

61-70

71-80

81-90

91-100

101-110

111-120

15. Have you ever taken the IELTS test in your country?

Yes

No

If 'Yes', what was the score that helped you to get the admission to the current institute in

If you cannot remember, then choose the score range:

Less than 4

4-4.5

5-5.5

6-6.5

7-7.5

8-8.5

9

16. Have you ever taken the IELTS test in the U.S.?

Yes

No

If 'Yes', how many times?

What is your highest IELTS scores?

If you cannot remember, then choose the score range:

Less than 4

4-4.5

5-5.5

6-6.5

7-7.5

8-8.5

9

17. How long have you been in the United States?

1-6 months

7 months - 1 year

1 year & 1 month - 1 year & 6 months
1 year & 7 months - 2 years
2 years & 1 month - 2 years & 6 months
2 years & 7 months - 3 years
3 years & 1 month - 3 years & 6 months
3 years & 7 months - 4 years

18. What is the name of your current institution where you are studying?
19. What is your academic level in the English language institution?
20. In what level did you primarily learn English as a second or a foreign language?
- Elementary school
 - Middle school
 - High school
 - Undergraduate school
 - Graduate school
 - Enrolling in ESL Classes
 - Family Taught
 - Watching American Shows

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

A. Background information

1. Can you introduce yourself first? (*Nationality, age, education level, languages spoken, university, English language institute*)
2. Have you ever taken the iBT TOEFL test in your home country and in the U.S.? How many times? What are your scores?
3. Have you ever taken the IELTS test in your home country and in the U.S.? How many? What are your scores?
4. How long have you been studying in the English language institute in the U.S.?

B. Adjustment to the academic environment:

1. What major differences between American schools and your country schools are you experiencing?
2. What are the main challenges that you encountered in the American educational environment?
3. How much support do you get from your classmates and teachers with regard to your academic adjustment needs?
4. How would you describe the relationship that exists between you and your classmates?
5. Do you find it difficult when doing class projects at school or homework? Do you ask for help when you need it?
6. Do you have collaborative group work opportunities with other students? Describe those experiences?
7. How have the academic adjustments affected your English language proficiency, if at all?

C. Adjustment to the social environment

1. What are the main social challenges that you encountered in the U.S.?
2. Do you feel that people in the U.S. understand your perceptions and culture?
3. Do you have a lot of friends here in the U.S.? Do you get support from them?
4. Who have you been socializing with during your time at the English language institute?
5. Do you find it difficult or uncomfortable to interact and socialize with domestic students? If yes, why do you think you feel this way?
6. Are you satisfied with the social environment here in the U.S.?
7. How does social adjustment affect you learning English in the U.S.?
8. What are the main similarities/differences you find between Americans and people from your home country?
9. Do you participate in social activities on campus/ off campus? What kind of activities?

D. Adjustment to the personal-emotional environment

1. What specific problems have you experienced in terms of interpersonal adjustment (such as get along with other people)?
2. What types of services does the campus have for international students?
3. Do you often participate in extracurricular activities on/off campus? Why and why not?
4. How have your experiences at this institution influenced your personal beliefs?
5. Reflecting back on your experiences at the institution, would you recommend the American schools to friends for their studies? Why?
6. Have you ever felt homesickness while studying in the U.S.? When and Why?
7. What are your most unforgettable experiences so far about living and studying here in the U.S.? (Good & bad)
8. How have personal or emotional challenges affected your English language proficiency, if at all?
9. Is there anything else you wish to share or add?

APPENDIX D: IRB APPROVAL LETTER



University of Central Florida Institutional Review
Board Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1**
FWA00000351, IRB00001138

To: **Mais Flaieh Hasan Al Jabbawi**

Date: **November 20, 2018**

Dear Researcher:

On 11/20/2018 the IRB approved the following human participant research until 11/19/2019 inclusive:

Type of Review:	UCF Initial Review Submission Form Expedited Review
Project Title:	A MIXED-METHOD EXAMINATION OF THE IMPACT OF ACADEMIC, SOCIAL, AND PERSONAL-EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ARABIAN GULF STUDENTS STUDYING IN AMERICAN INTENSIVE ENGLISH PROGRAMS
Investigator:	Mais Flaieh Hasan Al Jabbawi
IRB Number:	SBE-18-14394
Funding Agency:	
Grant Title:	
Research ID:	N/A

The scientific merit of the research was considered during the IRB review. The Continuing Review Application must be submitted 30 days prior to the expiration date for studies that were previously expedited, and 60 days prior to the expiration date for research that was previously reviewed at a convened meeting. Do not make changes to the study (i.e., protocol, methodology, consent form, personnel, site, etc.) before obtaining IRB approval. A Modification Form **cannot** be used to extend the approval period of a study. All forms may be completed and submitted online at <https://iris.research.ucf.edu>.

If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of 11/19/2019, approval of this research expires on that date. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

Use of the approved, stamped consent document(s) is required. The new form supersedes all previous versions, which are now invalid for further use. Only approved investigators (or other approved key study personnel) may solicit consent for research participation. Participants or their representatives must receive a copy of the consent form(s).

All data, including signed consent forms if applicable, must be retained and secured per protocol for a minimum of five years (six if HIPAA applies) past the completion of this research. Any links to the identification of participants should be maintained and secured per protocol. Additional requirements may be imposed by your funding agency, your department, or other entities. Access to data is limited to authorized individuals listed as key study personnel.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the [Investigator Manual](#).

APPENDIX E: VALIDATION EMAIL OF ARABIC TRANSLATION

From: Nagham Majeed <nagham.majeed@Knights.ucf.edu>
Subject: Documents' translation
Date: November 13, 2018 at 12:46:43 PM EST
To: Mais Al-Jabbawi <massfreedom@Knights.ucf.edu>

Dear Ms. Mais Al-Jabbawi,

Thank you for reaching me out concerning the documents' translation from English into Arabic for your research "A Mixed Method Examination of the Impact of Academic, Social, and Personal-Emotional Adjustment on the English Performance of Arabian Gulf Students Studying in American Intensive English Programs". All the translated documents of the English version (the letter of invitation, the two questionnaires, demographic questionnaire, the invitation mail, and the interview questions) match the Arabic translation. Therefore, I think you do not need any other modification to the documents.

Good luck in your dissertation

Nagham Majeed
Doctoral Candidate / TESOL Track
College of Community, Innovation, and Education
Fulbright Alumni

APPENDIX F: PERMISSION LETTER FROM SIQ

From: **Bart Rienties** bart.rienties@open.ac.uk
Subject: Social Integration Questionnaire (SIQ)
Date: August 27, 2018 at 11:15 AM
To: Mais.Aljabbawi@ucf.edu

8

Hello Mais Al-Jabbawi,

Thanks for contacting me about the SIQ. Please find attached the information, and syntax. I would be grateful if you could send me the paper when it is published 😊

Best wishes,

Bart

Dear Dr. Rienties,

My name is Mais Al-Jabbawi and I am a doctoral candidate in the TESOL program at University of Central Florida, College of Community Innovation and Education, USA. I am working on my dissertation now, which is entitled "An Examination of the Impact of Academic, Social, and Personal-Emotional Adjustments of Arabian Gulf Students on Their Academic Performance Studying in Intensive English Language Programs in the United States of America: A Mixed Method Investigation", and I am planning on using the SIQ as one of the methods for collecting data. My population is students from the Middle East studying in IEPs in the USA. I read most of your articles about students adjustment in higher education and I believe that the SIQ fits with the porous of my study.

I am asking if I can get a copy of the SIQ to use it in my study, I would really appreciate it and it will help me a lot in conducting my research!

Thank you in advance.

Mais Al-Jabbawi
Doctoral Candidate/ TESOL Track
College of Education/ UCF
Adjunct Faculty/ ELI/ UCF
Fulbright Alumna
Mais.Aljabbawi@ucf.edu
massfreedom@knights.ucf.edu
(407) 437-3505



Prof Dr Bart Rienties | Professor of Learning Analytics: Institute of Educational Technology
Learning and Teaching Innovation
The Open University, Level 1, Jennie Lee Building, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA
Tel: +44 (0) 1908 332671
E: Bart.Rienties@open.ac.uk
I: <http://www.open.ac.uk/people/bcr58>

APPENDIX G: THE INVITATION LETTER

Dear Prospective Participant,

My name is Mais Flaieh Hasan, and I am a student at the Ph.D. in Education /TESOL program at the University of Central Florida, USA. Now, I am conducting my dissertation research that explores the academic, social, and personal as well as emotional problems that Arab students may face studying English in language institutes in the USA. I am conducting this study to help Arab students achieve better adjustment and academic success by overcoming problems and help their teachers understand the nature of the problems that Arab students encounter, so they will be able to help their Arab students do better academically. I am asking for your help. If you are 18 years old or older, a student in any Intensive English Program in the U.S., could you please in respond to the questionnaire in the attached link, which may take 15-30 minutes of your time.

Thank you for your time

Mais Al-Jabbawi
Doctoral Candidate in TESOL/ UCF

APPENDIX H: THE VALIDATION EMAILS OF ENGLISH TRANSCRIPTS AND THEME CODING



From: Nawras Al-Abbas nawrashadi@gmail.com

Subject: Re: Translation from Arabic into English

Date: April 22, 2019 at 4:12 PM

To: Mais Al-Jabbawi massfreedom@knights.ucf.edu

Dear Mrs. Mais Al-Jabbawi,

In reference to the interviews' theme coding and translation from Arabic into English as part of your study "A Mixed Method Examination of the Impact of Academic, Social, and Personal-Emotional Adjustment on the English Performance of Arabian Gulf Students Studying in American Intensive English Programs", I'd like to say your translation of Arabic interviews match the English version. I believe that you don't need to make any significant changes.

For the interviews' coding, please find the attached documents that highlight the theme coding I rationalize in the interviews' transcripts.

I hope I was able to help. Please let me know if I can assist you more.

Warmly,

Nawras Al-Abbas,

PhD. Department of Psychology,

College of Humanities Education,

University of Babylon.

From: **Nagham Majeed** nagham.majeed@Knights.ucf.edu
Subject: Theme coding and translation
Date: April 24, 2019 at 2:29 PM
To: **Mais Al-Jabbawi** massfreedom@Knights.ucf.edu



Dear Ms. Mais Al-Jabbawi,

Thank you for reaching me out regarding the interviews' theme coding and translation from Arabic language into English language for your research "A Mixed Method Examination of the Impact of Academic, Social, and Personal-Emotional Adjustment on the English Performance of Arabian Gulf Students Studying in American Intensive English Programs". All the translated documents of the Arabic version of the interviews match the English translation. Therefore, I believe that there are no further changes needed at this time.

In regard to the interviews' coding, please find the attached documents that highlight the theme coding I rationalize in the interviews' transcripts.

I hope this helps you in your study and good luck in your dissertation!

Nagham Majeed
Doctoral Candidate / TESOL Track
College of Community, Innovation, and Education
Fulbright Alumni

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